

تذكرة الرشيد

TADHKIRATUR RASHID

Biography of
Hadrat Maulānā Rashid Ahmad Sahib
Muhaddith Gangohi
Quddisa sirruhu al-'aziz

Hadrat Maulana 'Ashiq Ilahi Meeruti Rahimahullah

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'I saw Qutb al-'Ālam Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimullāh* in a dream. He was standing in the grave in which he had been buried and was sending the following salutation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

بِعَدَدِ كُلِّ ذَرَّةٍ اَلْفَ مَرَّةٍ

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī
Quddisa sirruhu al-'azīz



Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ, Rabb of the worlds, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, Master of the Day of Judgement. May peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his family, his companions and may it extend to every pious, Allāh-fearing Muslim until the Day of Ressurrection.

Indeed, there is no comparison to this treasure which has been gifted to us through the generosity of our spiritual elders (*may Allāh be pleased with them all*) and the excellent authorship of Hadrat Maulānā ‘Āshiq Ilāhī Meerutī rahimahullāh. The humility and modesty of this great scholar and role-model - Shaykh al-Mashā’ikh Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Muḥaddīth Gangohī rahimahullāh - permeates every page of this two-volume bequest. His matchless knowledge and wisdom emanates from every word of advice and every morsel of guidance.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude to Allāh ﷻ for providing us the opportunity to make this biography available in the English language.

“This is the Bounty of Allāh which He bestows on whomever He Wills. And Allāh is the Owner of Mighty Grace.”

This book is bound to be a source of inspiration and benefit to every sincere Muslim who is desirous of purifying himself and gaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ - especially those *tālibīn* (seekers) who are acquainted with the field of *taṣawwuf* and have aligned themselves to the *tarīqah*.

With great sincerity of heart we request that you should read this biography with the intention of gaining spiritual benefit, blessings and Nūr. There is great knowledge and wisdom hidden within its covers, but it will only be discovered by the one who has a sincere desire to progress towards the proximity of Allāh ﷻ.

A word of advice:

This biography was written by a great Islamic scholar - about a great Islamic scholar. Some of the content of this biography will therefore be beyond the understanding of the average Muslim. Any reader, who is not a scholar of *Dīn*, should not try to make sense of the content and practice upon it according to his own understanding as this could lead to his deviation. In the case of scholarly discussions, we advise the reader to ask the ‘*ulamā*’ of *Dīn* for guidance and explanation.

We also advise the reader not to read the medical advice which was offered by *Hadrat Imām Rabbānī rahimahullāh* and treat his own physical ailments. Remember that the treatment of any ailment is dependent on the personal constitution and physical

make-up of a person, and therefore the treatment for the same illness will differ from one person to the next. It is therefore best to follow the advice of a qualified practitioner.

Even though mention has been made of the '*amalīyyāt*' which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh* used to prescribe, we sincerely advise that the reader should not blindly practice on these, write out his own *ta'wīdh*, and consider himself to be a self-made '*āmil*'. There are many pseudo-'*āmils*' in this world today and they have become a cause of great danger to the *Ummah*. Do not ever place your trust and reliance upon a *ta'wīdh* or an '*āmil*', but place your trust in Allāh ﷻ, turn to Him in *du'ā*, and engage in abundant *dhikr*. Everything that befalls us is by the Will of Allāh ﷻ and He is our only Refuge.

We make *du'ā* that Allāh ﷻ will raise the ranks of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh*, reward him with the best of rewards, forgive him his sins, and accept his immense contribution to the *Ummah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. *Inshā Allāh, Āmīn*.

We also make *du'ā* that Allāh ﷻ will accept our humble efforts and that He will extend His Bounties towards each and every person who has assisted in this publication – regardless of how small his contribution may have been. We make *du'ā* that this book will prove to be a blessing and a mercy to every reader, and we ask Allāh ﷻ to guide us in each endeavour towards propagating and protecting this perfect *Dīn*. *Inshā Allāh, Āmīn*.

We especially thank Dārūl ‘Ulūm Zakariyyā, Lenasia, for assisting us in the task of translating the Persian couplets.

Allah Ta’ala – the Almighty and All-Capable – is the only One Who is Perfect. We are but human beings and therefore we are fallible. We ask you to inform us of any grave errors which you may come across so that it may be corrected in future publications.

Was salām.

Editor: PP Khanqah Musjid Sheikh Zakariyya
Rajab 1434 [May 2013]
Lenasia, South Africa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ونؤمن به ونتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ومن سيئات أعمالنا، من يهده الله فلا مضل له، ومن يضلل الله فلا هادي له، ونشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، ونشهد أن سيدنا ومولانا وشفيعنا محمدا عبده ورسوله.

I, 'Āshiq Ilāhī *may Allāh pardon him*, who is filled with shortcomings, address the Muslims in general and my fellow brothers in the *tarīqah* in particular, with absolute respect for all of them and say: The pain that was felt at the death of Qutb al-'Ālam Qudwah al-'Ulamā' Ghauth al-A'zam Uswatul Fuqahā' Jāmi' al-Fadā'il wa al-Fawā'id al-'Ulīyyah Mustajmi' as-Sifāt wa al-Khaṣā'il al-Bahīyyah as-Sunnīyyah, defender of this clear and lucid *Dīn*, reviver of this era, our *wasīlah* to Allāh, Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib Muḥaddith Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu al-'azīz*, was not confined to a certain section of a country or a specific group of people. This painful and agonizing event tore the hearts and caused sorrow to all the Muslims of India and other countries, according to their bond with *Dīn* and their love for the Sunnah.

Before the hearts of his *khuddām* (attendants) could settle from this tragedy, they already started receiving, not merely requests, but demands from everywhere for the compilation of a biography on the source of perfection [*Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh*]. This blessed call was a natural and innate call towards which Allāh ﷻ had directed the hearts and tongues. However, due to certain reasons, it was difficult to fulfil these wishes and requests to pen the life and conditions of *Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh*. It was

beyond human power to solve these problems and complications.

The present era has provided numerous means to convey news and information from one place to another and from one country to another. A person is now able to learn about all the good and bad conditions prevailing in another country, while sitting in the comfort of his own home. Via these means, the message was clearly conveyed to every corner of India, as well as other famous countries of the world, that Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullah* had no equal in his reliance upon Allāh ﷻ, his patience, contentment, spiritual exercises, acts of worship, *taqwā*, purity, striving, steadfastness, independence, love for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and hatred for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. In like manner he had no equal in his in-depth knowledge, far-sightedness, juristical acumen, Hadīth proficiency, integrity, reliability, memory, mastery, understanding, and insight in the traditional and rational sciences.

Thus, if someone were to write about an unparalleled Shaykh and a matchless *qutb* of his time, where would he start? If someone, who continuously stared at every limb and every part of the embodiment of light without satiating his desire to continue staring at his beauty, were to write about him – where would he begin?

*On how many of your excellences shall I sacrifice myself?
You have thousands of excellences
and I have just one restless heart.*

A sincere friend once said to our respected and honourable Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhelwī [*rahimahullāh*]: "This important task [of writing a biography on Hadrat Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*] can be accomplished by none but you because Hadrat used to treat you with great affection. You were very close to him. You were always in his presence and you are fully aware of his conditions and practices (*ma'mūlāt*).

Furthermore, Allāh ﷻ specifically blessed you with knowledge of Hadrat's temperament and disposition. If you are going to be negligent in doing this favour to the creation, you will be displaying impoliteness and disregard." The Maulānā replied by remaining absolutely silent. If he had offered a reply, he would in all probability have said: "Brother, I do not remember anything. Why are you asking me to write and what do you want from me? Hadrat's entire life was this: He sacrificed his entire life for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and taught others to do the same. I do not remember anything else."

Those of Hadrat's special associates whom we looked up to and whom we expected to write his biography were preoccupied since before and, apart from the outward responsibilities which they had, they now had to bear the responsibility of spiritual supervision. If we had to look with a balanced eye, we would be able deduce that – by Allāh – it was their lofty courage which made them worthy of bearing this heavy responsibility. They were not aware of day and night, morning, evening and afternoon – they left aside seeking their livelihood, placed their reliance upon Allāh ﷻ and were fully occupied in writing and compiling books, teaching and imparting knowledge, delivering lectures and words of advice, guiding and inspiring, issuing *fatawā*, answering letters and other correspondences, seeing to the comfort of guests, pondering and reflecting over ways of reforming people and they remained fully devoted in all these matters. In short, if just one service was required, it may have been considered, but countless occupations and responsibilities had to be fulfilled in short nights and days. It would have been most shameful and audacious to still add to their workload by asking them to compile a biography of the Shaykh.

Despite all this, these personalities paid attention to this matter and resorted to the lofty courage and devotion which Allāh ﷻ had blessed them with. This devotion was the result of the love of that sanctified being, and it happened at a time when there was a great

need for a good memory. It was as though they did not even realize that there would soon come a time when they would have to convey the message of the life of this great personality – who was more beloved to them than their own lives – to the people.

So, even when they mustered the courage of taking up this task, their minds, hearts, memories and thoughts replied and said: "Brother, what are you going to write? Do you even remember what transpired? In the presence of the setting sun and the disappearing moon, did your loving engrossment even permit you to monitor every part of his life and remember fleeting incidents and events which would now enable you to write something?"

I clearly remember the statement of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī [*rahimahullāh*] when I requested him to provide me with some details from Hadrat's life: "After receiving your letter, I remained at a loss for several days as to what I should write. Thousands of topics were flooding into my mind and every one I looked at called out to me to write on it. I was perplexed as to how I would be able to write about all these topics and – if I should decide not to write about all of them – on which basis would I give preference to one over the other? I remained in this state of confusion for several days. Eventually, I felt that I should also get a share of this sanctified memoir and that I should make it a means of my salvation in the Hereafter. Thus I began writing."

On one occasion, Hadrat Thānwī [*rahimahullāh*] said: "It is difficult to accomplish this important task because, while Hadrat was alive, his associates never thought that a time would come when they would have to experience his departure from this world to the abode of eternal comfort and that they would have to write about his life. Everyone obviously knew that such a tragedy would eventually take place, because every Muslim believes that everything apart from Allāh ﷻ is bound to perish. Yet they did not remain fully conscious of this certainty. Knowledge of his

incumbent death was similar to that sure knowledge that every human being possesses about his own unavoidable death, yet his distraction and heedlessness prevents him from thinking about it." We continue with our lives as though death will never overtake us.

In our search for a prospective author, we had to look at all those people who had the honour of visiting Hadrat on occasion. Our minds could not even bring them to memory and no occasional visitor could be expected to write the full history of Hadrat's life – from birth until death. In order to pen all the essential and authentic aspects of Hadrat's life, the potential author would have had to be someone who had remained constantly in the company of the Shaykh, was completely attached to him, had great love for him and also had love and attachment to the fellow brothers of the *ṭarīqah*. He would have to be able to do research, investigate and sift out information. Such a task required reflection and concentration. Each topic required sufficient time and copious information.

Based on their lack of resources and their restricted abilities, many of these people were excused from the task. Others were too overcome by the grief and sorrow of this tragedy. In fact, their grief was greater than the grief of those who were above them. They perceived their misfortune at being shown the wonders of the Shaykh and feeling their hearts incline towards him, yet, before they could fulfil their wishes to become connected to him, he passed away.

The analogy of those who were close to him, is that of a child whose father passed away after he had reached an age where he was capable of earning his own living. Those whose hearts were inclined towards him can be compared to a suckling infant whose mother handed him over to others and chose to depart from this world on her lengthy journey to the Hereafter.

If anyone had to see this orphaned child whose affectionate father had departed from his life, or the suckling infant who had been separated from his mother, it would certainly have moved them to tears. Hadrat's associates seemed to be encompassed in darkness. The condition of those poor souls who had been deprived of the outward shadow of their spiritual father spoke volumes – as described by a poet:

*How sorrowful is the condition of the helpless traveller?
Overcome by fatigue,
he sits down before he can reach his destination
[and is unable to complete the journey].*

In this way, a full year passed without even a prelude to the biography being written. However, Allāh ﷻ had willed material and spiritual benefit for this worthless servant [referring to himself] in the course of writing this memoir and willed for the topics which were concealed in those pure hearts to come into the open and be scattered like pearls. Consequently, the leader of the 'ārifin, the choice of the sālikīn, the recipient of *rashīdī* (attributed to Hadrat Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*) light and my master, Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib, instructed this worthless servant to place his trust in Allāh ﷻ, commence this task and to utilize whatever outward means were at his disposal. This is most certainly not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ - the Knower of the Unseen – was Witness to my trembling and shuddering whenever I merely thought of this important task. By Allāh, it never crossed my mind that I was qualified for this mammoth task. In fact, I felt extremely astonished and astounded and I thought to myself that these personalities, who considered me worthy of this task, had been deceived by my outward devotion. This was because I never had the honour of

visiting Hadrat and remaining in his company except for five or six times, which collectively could not have added up to more than one month. In addition to this, I was not even fully acquainted with Hadrat's associates.

Furthermore, I possessed the following shortcomings: (1) I was not acquainted with the essence of *taṣawwuf*. (2) I did not know the real meaning of *wilāyat*. (3) I did not know the etiquette of a *murīd*. (4) I had no knowledge of the finer points and intricacies of the *mashā'ikh*. (5) I was innately faint-hearted. (6) I was a person who would usually shy away from work and responsibilities. (7) I was devoid of a cultured soul and, (8) I was lacking in self-reformation.

Be it modesty or reservation, my desire was to die for the person whom I held on to and I hoped to enter Paradise without striving and working towards it. Now, if a person is so selfish and so worthless, can it ever be expected of him to write a biography? May Allāh ﷻ forgive me for my incorrect thoughts and the folly of attributing an error in judgement to my elders [for having appointed me for this task], which crossed my mind due to my intimate knowledge of my personal condition. I considered myself to be an immature child. It was beyond my understanding that the mental and spiritual power that would author the biography of Hadrat Rashid Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not be my own, but that of someone else. Slowly the reality dawned upon me that the spiritual powers of these holy souls simply needed to use my hand and my pen as a means.

Six full months passed in this state of concern, astonishment and incorrect thoughts. However, since I had some affinity for Qutb al-'Ālam [Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*], I displayed my respect to them [the three aforementioned personalities who requested me to author this biography] and could say nothing but: "Very well [I will take up this task]." Eventually I plucked up the courage and decided to stop procrastinating. I finally persuaded myself to at least hold

the pen in my hand and commence the task in the Name of Allāh ﷻ. I felt convinced that help would come from the unseen and that life would be blown into a lifeless corpse.

I took some paper, a pen and ink, and sat down. I then wrote down the recommended *khutbah* and commenced. In essence it was solely my weak faith that had delayed me, because there is no dearth in the treasures of Allāh ﷻ. I am saying this by way of expressing Allāh's favours upon me: After I wrote the *khutbah*, it seemed as though fountains were springing and gushing forth from dry rocks and pouring out from my pen. The more I wrote, the more I became inclined towards the task ahead and I felt my courage increasing.

When I slept at night, I would dream that I was writing the biography. Whenever I had to move about out of necessity, I would constantly be conscious of jotting down incidents and events which should be added in the book. The mere thought of something would open the slush-gates and ideas would flow into my mind and gush into my heart. This was undoubtedly help from the unseen and ought to be considered as one of the miracles of this pious servant of Allāh ﷻ.

Together with this, I perceived another form of help – more physical in nature – which can only be described as the natural system of cause and effect. I simply had to send a small card to my associates and brothers in the *ṭarīqah*, expressing my desire for specific subject matter, and I would receive an overwhelming response from all sides. Those who were intoxicated by their love for the Gangohī threshold would record whatever they could remember and post it to me.

Oh my Pure Allāh ﷻ, Whose treasures are forever overflowing! Bestow great joy in both the worlds upon these beloved *dīnī* brothers, as reward for the love which they have for this *dīn*. Reward them in such a way that its eternal fragrance and

everlasting joy will fill every moment of their lives with pleasure and be pleasing unto You. Grant them progress in this world beyond their expectations and elevate their ranks in the Hereafter beyond their hopes. O Allāh! You are most certainly able to do this!

Within a matter of two months and a few days, I had reached the limit of my knowledge and effort and I had to conclude this book. Thereafter I went to Deoband, Sahāranpūr and Gangoh, and presented it to my elders. It was now in their hands to decide on a publisher, to distribute the book and to collect the profits of this world. The thought had crossed my mind that some people may say that I had written this biography for the sake of worldly gain and popularity and for no other reason. This concern prompted me to hand the manuscript over to someone else for publishing.

I presented the book to Hadrat's son, Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib, in Gangoh. I will never forget the joy which he expressed upon receiving this book. Apart from the congratulation which I received from his sweet tongue, he also made *du'ā'* for me and I have firm conviction in the acceptance thereof. He then told me: "No one but you may publish this book. I am not advising you – I am ordering you. Any worldly profits which accrue from its sale must go to you. There is nothing wrong with it if a person is able to acquire *dīn* at the feet of his Shaykh while at the same time earning his living from this world. Such a person is most fortunate indeed. If one considers it deplorable to earn a lawful worldly income for rendering *dīnī* services, can one possibly consider it admirable to work for the *kuffār*, writing biographies of worldly people? Go and do not even think of such accusations. If anyone should make such an accusation, give him the final answer and say: 'This is also in fulfilment of the order of Mas'ūd Ahmad. If an activity or occupation is not worldly, but *dīnī*, then earn from it and earn as much as you want.'"

I cannot say that I do not desire this world. Oh, I am a worthless, greedy slave of dirhams and dīnārs! But – *al-hamdu lillāh* – the master's son concealed the desires of my self with garments of honour. Bearing in mind that he was brought up in the master's house, I returned happily from there and started making arrangements for publishing this book.

I encountered some obstacles after this incident and I experienced some doubts which – despite numerous demands from close associates and many letters enquiring about the publishing – prevented me from even touching the manuscript. On several occasions Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib [Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh*] asked me in his sweet tongue: "What is the delay in printing the biography?" I felt completely ashamed. The moment I returned from the *jalsah* of Mazāhir al-'Ulūm, I took out the manuscript. I commenced the proof-reading on Wednesday, the 2nd of Muḥarram 1326 A.H. (corresponding with the 5th of February 1908) and made a few minor changes here and there. Thereafter the printing started.

During the course of writing the book, I received an envelope via the post from a righteous person whom I had never met. He stated in the letter: "I dreamt that the biography of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was being written. A pious elder interpreted this dream and told me that it seems that a biography of a person who was a strict follower of the Sharī'ah was in the process of being written. Congratulations to you. This glad tidings is being fulfilled at your hands."

I thanked Allāh ﷻ for His Mercy. Thereafter I personally had several astonishing dreams, one after the other. I was also honoured by seeing Hadrat [Gangohī *rahimahullāh*] in a dream. He smiled at me and said: "Are you writing my biography?" I stood nearby him, complaining about my incapability. I also mentioned some friendly complaints of my associates. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* related some aspects of his life to me and said: "Write about this as well." When

I awoke, I could unfortunately not remember much of what he had said.

Through the extreme Kindness of Allāh ﷻ, these glad tidings blew life into my dead power and enabled me to present this biography to the reader to the best of my ability. I am still saddened by the fact that, during my research, I was unable to find sufficient information on certain valuable and unique aspects of Hadrat's life. I place my hope in Allāh ﷻ that He will enable me to make additions to this biography in the form of booklets covering Hadrat's correspondence, research and contributions in the field of jurisprudence. If Allāh ﷻ permits, this will continue for many more years.

Was salām

The seeker of unlimited blessings,

'Āshiq Ilāhī Meerutī, *may Allāh ﷻ pardon him.*



Over twelve centuries have passed since the final Messenger of humanity, Muḥammad ﷺ, and the true guide of the world, Aḥmad-e-Mujtabā ﷺ, severed his physical contact with the inhabitants of this world. The attack of the enemies against the true laws of Islam and its straight forward beliefs come as no surprise.

The year 1244 A.H. is the year in which the compilation of this book commenced. It was a time when sinning and irreligiousness were gushing forth from every corner of the earth and encompassing the world. Efforts were made – not only by the enemies, but even by pseudo-friends – to reduce the lush garden which was left by the Messenger ﷺ into a barren desert. Naïve Muslims were so enslaved by the ravages of time that tribal customs and family traditions were able to twist and turn them at will. Ignorance regarding Islam had completely encompassed the majority of those who possessed īmān in their hearts and expressed the *kalimah* verbally. This ignorance covered them just as dense clouds would cover the sun and turn the day into night.

Civilization, politics, transactions and social life were in complete disarray. The general sentiment was that Islam merely comprised of ṣalāh, fasting, stories of the doe-eyed damsels (*hūrīs*) of Paradise, the snakes and scorpions of Hell and the worms of the grave and that Islam had nothing to do with man's livelihood, his occupation, or other internal and external aspects of his life. A person was free to do business as he pleased, eat and drink whatever he liked, wear whatever suited his fancy and adopt whatever ways of sitting, standing, meeting and socializing he preferred. In short, he was free to do as he pleased in every facet of his life.

If, by chance, he thought of following any laws, he would emulate the principles of trade as laid down by the enemies of Islam – those who bore an innate hatred towards the Prophet of Islam [Muhammad ﷺ]. If he were to follow any norms of social etiquette, he would follow those laid down by ancient and modern philosophers who, in the name of reformation, caused more destruction than good. Even if he were to follow anyone on occasions of happiness or grief, such as weddings and funerals, or during the inevitable events of life and death, he would probably follow those ancient customs of his forefathers which neither the Sharī'ah nor common sense could accept.

If a person had the courage to turn towards refinement and reformation of character, he would turn to those ignoramuses who were the embodiment of ignorance and who were not even ashamed to lay claim to divinity.

In short, the tables had turned completely, and such darkness pervaded mankind that irreligiousness was considered to be religion, destruction was considered to be constructive, and ignorance was considered to be knowledge. Fabrications and acts of artful trickery were considered to be 'Divine Inspiration' (*kashf*) and miracles (*karāmāt*).

No effort was made for transactions to be taught, for morals to be understood or for respect to be shown to Divinity and Prophethood and neither was the etiquette and stages of the soul perfected. The storm of deviation was pounding and striking. A huge flood of vice was rising, making a tumultuous noise. This had destructive and vicious consequences. A general mob-mentality was on the increase where people despised any knowledge of the Sharī'ah and regarded the Prophetic way of life with contempt. The masses considered themselves to be self-sufficient and independent of the '*ulamā*' and the pseudo-'*ulamā*' – because they were deprived of the rectification of their *nafs* – became their slaves and paid employees.

In so doing, they cast aside their academic honour and enjoyed worldly comforts by selling their *Dīn*.

There was a time when the Arabs decorated the Ka'bah – may Allāh ﷻ increase it in excellence – with idols equal to the number of days in the year and considered it to be a very virtuous act. In like manner, fabricated theories of irreligiousness and false beliefs were being made a part of Islam, under the misconception that it was in support of the religion of Islam. Some areas in India were overpowered by naturalists (who believe that all religious truth is derived from nature and natural causes – and not from revelation), while other areas were either dominated by Mu'tazilah, atheists, Shī'ahs or Khawārij.

As rejection of *taqlīd* was spreading in one place, Qur'ānīyyat¹ and Mirzā'īyyat² was spreading somewhere else. While drums and guitars were playing in one place, people were going into trances of ecstasy while listening to the singing of immoral women somewhere else. While grave worship and *ta'ziyah*³ worship took place in one area, the *auliya'* of Allāh ﷻ were being humiliated and verbally abused somewhere else.

In short, excesses and shortcomings had completely spoiled the ground and the absence of equilibrium had destroyed everything.

To make matters worse, dissent divided the '*ulamā*' and each one was only worried about building his own Musjid. While the love of authority and wealth, personal greed and immoral self-indulgence

¹ Belief in the Qur'ān only and rejection of *Hadīth*.

² Or Qādiyānīyyat: belief that Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad of Qādiyān was a prophet.

³ Making images of the graves of *Hasan* ؓ and *Husayn* ؓ and parading them during *Muharram* Ahmad. This prohibited practice is the hallmark of Shī'ah beliefs and is ignorantly emulated by Sunnī Muslims of weak faith.

had crept into the ranks of the average Muslims, it had penetrated much deeper into the ranks of those who were considered to be their leaders. In exchange for a paltry sum of money, a person could get someone to deliver a talk on any topic he liked. For an insignificant amount of money, a *fatwā* and a ruling could be obtained and signed in one's favour.

These deluded leaders had become like solid rocks at the fountain of Islam – unable to drink from its sweet water, yet refusing to move from their places so that others could drink from it. To Allāh ﷻ we belong and to Him is our return!

As per the true prophecy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, such dark times needed a powerful 'ālim to serve as a reformer in every aspect. Such an 'ālim had to be embellished with the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and, through his total adherence to it, he would be able to serve as an example to the masses and as a proof to the 'ulamā'. He would have to possess a powerful spiritual strength that would enable him to attract the proud and haughty *maulwīs*. Just as every 'ālim becomes a leader to his own special group and solves their differences, so this noble personality would have to become the source from which the 'ulamā' of India could draw. He would have to solve their issues and difficulties and resolve the matters in which they differ and disagree.

In short, he would have to wear the turban of deputyship to the Messenger ﷺ and carry out this important service which was the responsibility of the Prophets ﷺ among the Banī Isrā'īl. He would have to be a guide to the main road of the Sharī'ah, a reviver of the religion and a scout and lighthouse in the difficult terrain of the *Tarīqah*.

My dear brothers in Islam!

Ponder over this for a while and consider the qualities that such a personality would need to possess if he were to occupy the seat of

protecting the *Dīn* and reforming the *ummah*. Can the responsibilities of such a lofty position possibly be fulfilled without being filled with the water of the copious sea of the Prophethood of Rasūlullāh ﷺ? It can never be fulfilled. It can never be fulfilled!

Such a pure deputy would need to fulfil the obligations of *ṣalāh*, fasting, charity, *zakāh*, *hajj* and be fully occupied in the recitation of the *Qur'ān*, remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and in seeking lawful sustenance, because, amongst other things, this would enable him to enjoin good and forbid evil. He would have to possess fortitude, patience, firmness and steadfastness in order to combat plots and deceit – powerful enough to move mountains. He would need to possess patience and forbearance in order to bear the severe hardship and pain, menacing criticism and condemnation of such a position.

He would have to be totally free of greed, avarice, anger, jealousy, malice, miserliness, materialism, pride, desire for fame, haughtiness, self-importance, egotistic conceit, ostentation, harshness and cruelty. The effulgence – obtained from his adherence to the *Sunnah* – would have to radiate, not only from his acts of worship, but from every mannerism and in all allowed matters, such as his movements.

He would have to have crossed the difficult terrain of repentance, fear, abstinence and contentment with the decree of Allāh ﷻ and would of necessity need to display piety, patience, gratitude, devotion, sincerity, reliance upon Allāh ﷻ and love for Allāh ﷻ and should not merely have spoken about these.

He would have to be renowned for his physical appearance, spiritual awe, noble character, judicious affection, motherly mercy, fatherly discipline, elegant nature, pure soul, noble position and lineage.

He would need to be unique in his eloquence, bravery, magnanimity, generosity, modesty, hospitality, humility, strength and power in the face of the spiritual conditions prevalent in his time.

This priceless gem and unique pearl of the 13th century made its grand appearance in the sanctified and blessed land of Gangoh. He was the *dīnī* father of hundreds and thousands of Muslims and the master and leader of several hundred '*ulamā*'. He was the pride of India, the leader of the world and the true spiritual guide — Maulānā al-Hāfīz al-Hāj ash-Shaykh Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Muhaddith Gangohī, *may Allāh ﷻ purify his grave and make Paradise his abode*. May Allāh ﷻ forgive sinful people like us by virtue of this pure soul. May Allāh ﷻ accept this blessed biography which acquired honour through Hadrat and may He make it a means through which I may attain salvation. Āmīn. Thūmma Āmīn.

I humbly appeal to all my readers to consider any error in this book as a mistake due to my own incompetence and request that they kindly correct the contents so that future editions may be printed correctly. This sinful servant [referring to himself] has done everything he could to compile this book as a sweet memoir of his Shaykh. I present it, first of all, to Hadrat Maulānā al-Maulwī Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib [*rahimahullāh*], Maulānā Maulwī Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib [*rahimahullāh*] and Maulānā Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib [*rahimahullāh*] and thereafter to all my brothers in the *tarīqah*.

I ask them all to make *du'ā* for me so that I may be blessed with Allāh's Pleasure and *khātimah bil khayr* (an excellent departure from this world, with *īmān*).

I further request my respected readers to please make a note in the margin of the book if you should remember a new topic, story or anecdote whilst reading. These additional notes will then be

included in a future addition, along with the name of the person who had made the contribution and, *inshā Allāh*, it would serve as a means of his progress in *Dīn*.

May Allāh ﷻ enable this beneficial memoir to endure forever. May He provide it with progress by night and day and make it a means of enjoyment for the *ahl-e-irfān* (those who truly recognize Allāh ﷻ), for those who love the Sunnah as well as the Ahlus-Sunnah. *Āmīn*.

وأخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة
والسلام على رسوله محمد وآله وأصحابه أجمعين

Announcement

This blessed memoir is titled *Tadhkiratur Rashīd* and serves as a formal presentation to our fellow brothers.

It has been decided that it should be sold at a negligible cost. However, the poverty of the poor and the affluence of the rich has been given due consideration. Therefore we aim to distribute one hundred copies periodically, free of charge, if a need for it can be established. Any financial contribution will be accepted from the affluent and, depending on their *taufīq* (inspiration), they are welcome to purchase additional copies and to make these available in offices and to those who are unable to obtain a copy, or does not possess the necessary funds to purchase one. We will act as representatives on behalf of these generous brothers and they will, *inshā Allāh*, be eligible for the rewards of their charity.

Many people were blessed with good dreams during the compilation and publishing of this book. This has convinced us of its acceptance. We trust that it will reach the four corners of the earth and that it will be counted as a worthy contribution, *inshā Allāh*.

Whoever comes across this book – in whichever country you may find yourself and in whichever era you may live – please make *du'ā'* for the author and his *akābirīn* (elders).

BIRTH

It was on a Monday at mid-morning that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī⁴ stepped into this fleeting world. The date was the 6th of Dhū al-Qa'dah 1244 A.H. Born in Gangoh, district Sahāranpūr, in the Sarā'e district, he took his first breath in the house of his forefathers which was attached to the *khānqāh* of Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Maulānā 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. This house is still in existence today and is situated about twenty-five to thirty feet to the east of the door of Hadrat Shaykh.

Unbeknown to him, his birth on a Monday was in accordance with the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ [who was also born on a Monday] and while he was still unaware, the following announcement was made in his ears:

"O you who are heedless of the way of life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and oblivious of the Hereafter, come to your senses. Wake up from your dream of negligence and remain hopeful and expectant of the true teaching for the revival of the dead Sunnah and abandoned ways of Rasūlullāh ﷺ which Allāh ﷻ Wills you to propagate and for which He made you a deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ."

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was of noble lineage and belonged to the Anṣārī⁵ and Ayyūbī⁶ lineage on both paternal and maternal sides.

His paternal lineage – as described by Hadrat himself – is as

⁴ Whenever the words Imām Rabbānī is mentioned in this book, it refers to Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.

⁵ An Anṣārī is a descendent of the Anṣār (Helpers) of Madīnah.

⁶ An Ayyūbī is a descendent of the Ṣaḥābī Hadrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī

رحمہ اللہ.

follows: Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad ibn Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib ibn Qādī Pīr Bakhsh ibn Qādī Ghulām Ḥasan ibn Qādī Ghulām 'Alī ibn Qādī 'Alī Akbar ibn Qādī Muḥammad Aslam al-Anṣārī al- Ayyūbī, *rahimahumullāh ajma'in*.

His maternal lineage, as transcribed from the family tree by his maternal uncle, Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib, is thus: Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib ibn Karīm an-Nisā' bint Farīd Bakhsh ibn Ghulām Qādir ibn Muḥammad Sālih ibn Ghulām Muḥammad ibn Fath Muḥammad ibn Taqī Muḥammad ibn Sālih Muḥammad ibn Qādī Muḥammad Kabīr al- Anṣārī ibn Qādī Amn ad-Dīn (known as Qādī Amman) ibn Khwājah Farīd ibn Khwājah Shāh ibn Khwājah Muḥammad Fādīl ibn Khwājah Hāshim ibn Khwājah 'Alā ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Rukn ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Najm ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Sharaf ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Buddā ibn Khwājah 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Khwājah Kabīr ibn Khwājah Rukn ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Sharaf ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Tāj ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Minhāj ad-Dīn ibn Khwājah Hāshim Buzurg ibn Ismā'il ibn Khwājah 'Abdullāh Hirālī ibn Khwājah Abū Muḥammad Mānsūr ibn Khwājah 'Alī ibn Khwājah Muḥammad ibn Khwājah Aḥmad ibn Khwājah Ja'far ibn Abī Mānsūr ibn Ayyūb ibn ash-Shaykh Abī Ayyūb al-Anṣārī ؎. The actual name of this Ṣahābī of Rasūlullāh ؐ is Khālīd ibn Zayd May Allāh ؎ shower His Mercy upon them all.

Ḥadrat's paternal lineage is linked to that of Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī Ghauth Samadānī Quṭb al-'Ālam Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī in the eleventh generation. The mother of Ḥadrat's grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh, was a lady by the name of Būlī and she was the daughter of Shaykh Muḥammad ṣalāh. Ḥadrat Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is the seventh grandfather of Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣalāh.

This line of descent reads as follows: Maulānū Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib ibn Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad ibn Qādī Pīr Bakhsh ibn Būlī bint Muḥammad Ṣalāh ibn Muḥammad Sālih ibn ash-Shaykh 'Abd

al-Aḥad ibn Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn Fathullāh ibn 'Abd aṣ-Ṣamad
ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn ash-Shaykh al-Imām al-Humām al-Akmal
'Abd al-Quddūs, *rahimahumullāh ajma'in*.

Although it is not difficult to obtain information and write separate biographies on all of Ḥadrat's forefathers, it is certain to take us away from the actual purpose of writing the biography of Ḥadrat Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. For this reason it has been omitted. However, in order to elucidate the biography in process, it was deemed necessary to mention certain fundamentals. Ḥadrat's genealogical greatness is aptly demonstrated by the fact that his forefather is Ḥadrat Maulānā Abū Ayyūb Madanī Anṣārī Ṣaḥābī ؓ – the first person to accommodate Rasūlullāh ﷺ in his home in Madīnah. He had seized the opportunity to host the overflowing treasure of Allāh ﷻ, whom the unappreciative people of Makkah had banished from their city.

There is no Muslim who does not know the pleasing name and the sweet biography of this host of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. There is no ear which has not heard about the honourable and well-known services which were rendered by this fortunate helper and supporter of the *Dīn*.

*Blessed be the house
to which appeared such a moon.
Where, in such a magnificent palace,
appeared a king like Hamayoon.⁷*

Should there then be any astonishment if, from the progeny of this Ṣaḥābī ؓ who had received endless *Dīnī* bounties and countless blessings from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, a unique pearl and priceless gem is born who would be the first to step forward at a time of *īmānī*

⁷ Hamayoon was a great king who once ruled over the entire India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

weakness and fill himself with all these unappreciated bounties of *Dīn*, who would revive the abandoned *Sunnahs* and rouse those who are sleeping in negligence?

All things considered, the reward for hosting Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the blessing obtained for being of service to him will remain until the Resurrection.

The rose which first appeared before Rasūlullāh ﷺ would inevitably emit its sweet fragrance until the Resurrection. At some point in the latter generations it was bound to remind us of that same captivating appearance and heady fragrance it possessed when it first appeared [before Rasūlullāh ﷺ].

In the 10th century, the arrival of the fragrant flower – Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs – imbued the world with its sweet scent. He was the pride of India and from the progeny of Imām Abū Hanīfah. He was the sun of guidance which cast its brilliant light of *‘irfān* (recognition of Allāh ﷻ) and its rays of conviction over the darkness that pervaded the world. Around the world it intoxicated hearts with its fragrance.

There was a need for someone who could fulfil the responsibility of guiding the deviated creation (towards the truth) – an authentic deputy of *risālat* (messenger-ship). Thus, from the Ayyūbī lineage and Nu‘mānī⁸ progeny, such an offspring arose – bestowed with the external and internal bounties of his forefathers and filled with the brilliant rays of the Sharī‘ah and *Tarīqah*.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs departed from this world on 23 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 945 A.H. Before the elapse of three hundred years, this world was blessed with the arrival of a new personality who was to uphold the good name of the Ayyūbī family and maintain the

⁸ Attributed to Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*.

honour of the Quddūsī throne. In the same village of Gangoh, where the Quddūsī *khānqāh* now lay deserted, he made his appearance – easing the hearts of those who were desperately seeking for a true deputy who could fill the shoes of their Shaykh.

There, on the 23rd of Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1245 A.H. – the 300th anniversary of the demise of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs – our Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* completed seven months and seven days of his life. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ for His Favours!

Hadrat Maulānā's paternal family was originally from Rāmpūr in the district of Sahāranpūr. However, his grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib, had relocated to Gangoh. Therefore, the progeny which followed were attributed to Gangoh. Qādī Pīr Bakhsh had changed his place of residence [from Rāmpūr to Gangoh] because of his maternal cousin, Shāh Quṭb 'Alī Sāhib, who was a resident of Gangoh. Shāh Sāhib was involved in constant disputes with his cousins and family members. This persistent opposition in certain matters eventually resulted in great hostility. There was a collective effort [by his family members] not merely to assault Shāh Quṭb 'Alī Sāhib, but to kill him. Plans and plots were schemed for his murder. Initially Shāh Sāhib bore all their animosity with great courage. However, he started searching for supporters when the information reached him that his relatives were conspiring to kill him. He found no one apart from his cousin, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh, and a few of his own relatives.

He wrote to his cousin and informed him about his predicament and the life-threatening problems he was facing. He requested that his cousin should consider relocating to Gangoh, together with his family, as he felt that this would serve a dual purpose. Firstly, he would have some support and secondly, his opposition would feel intimidated.

The Ayyūbī family of Rāmpūr was a courageous family by nature. In several towns Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib was particularly known for his bravery and courage. He was very proficient in both shooting and archery.

Towards the end of his life he lost his eyesight, but he was such an excellent marksman that he was able to shoot an animal by merely following the sound. On one occasion he was sitting in a tree when he heard the sound of a monkey. He aimed his rifle and asked the bystanders to shake the branches of the tree and to chase the monkey. There was some movement which was followed by a loud bang and the monkey fell to the ground. The shaking of the branches caused the monkey to move. The shot was fired and the result was plainly visible.

The fact of the matter is that Qādī Sāhib was of the Anṣārī lineage and he refused to abstain from helping his cousins. Although he had to leave his beloved hometown, he considered it to be against his human nature and noble origins [to remain indifferent and leave a family member helpless]. He departed with some fellow tribesmen and his close relatives and headed for Gangoh.

Qādī Sāhib was only fifteen years old at the time. Few people today display such depth of understanding at such a tender age. However – look at the qualities he possessed: He was able to identify with his own family and gave due consideration to upholding family ties. He showed concern for his maternal grandfather's family, offered his co-operation and displayed sentiments of brotherhood. He was prepared to leave his hometown – giving precedence to the needs of others over his own – thus demonstrating his affection, loyalty, courage and high-mindedness. These, amongst other priceless qualities, were acquired from that virtuous Ṣahābī [Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī ؓ] – the attendant and host of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – and transferred to his progeny in successive generations.

Were it not for this, would he have left Rāmpūr for Gangoh? Look at the affection he had for his cousin and how he leapt to his assistance. In this day and age, we will call this interfering in someone else's affairs, or bearing the burdens of someone else on one's shoulders.

This was the invitation which led to Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib's settlement in Gangoh. There he married into a noble family and, from that union, Maulwī Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib was born. He was the father of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib .

Not only was Gangoh the birthplace of Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib, but it was also where he received his upbringing and training. He lived there, studied there and entered his youth and adulthood there. It was also in this village where he later married into the Anṣārī family. His wife was the sister of Maulānā Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib. He was the elder brother of Maulwī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib who was martyred during the Indian Mutiny. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon him.

Hadrat Maulānā's wife, Bībī Khadijah, was his cousin. She was the daughter of Maulānā Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib – Hadrat's maternal uncle⁹ and father-in-law. This chaste woman, who had the honour of being the wife of Qutb 'Ālam [Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*], was the mother of his three children, Hakīm Maulānā Maulwī Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib, Maulānā Maulwī Mahmūd Aḥmad Sāhib and Safīyyah Khātūn. Safīyyah was the wife of Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib.

Hadrat Maulānā's father, Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib

⁹ Most of the details in the early section of this biography were provided by Hadrat *rahimahullāh*'s son and daughter.

rahimahullāh, was a senior 'ālim and a respected leader of his time. He practised on the knowledge he possessed and was a devoted Sufi. He had the honour of studying the Sharī'ah under the family of Hujjatullāh Hadrat Shāh Walī-ullāh and, as far as the *tarīqah* is concerned, he was attached and affiliated to Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib Mujaddidī Naqshbandī *rahimahullāh*. Since the Maulānā was a devoted *murīd* of his Shaykh and possessed knowledge of the Sharī'ah, he benefited tremendously from the gushing ocean of self-reformation, *sulūk* and *tasawwuf*. He was extremely proficient in calligraphy. Consequently, he wrote numerous books by hand in a hand-writing style which was absolutely clear and well presented – like beads on a *tasbīh*. Many of his hand-written books are still in existence today. They are preserved in a box which belongs to Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib [the son of Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*].

Maulwī Hidāyat Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was also proficient in 'amaliyyāt and the writing of *ta'wīdh*. He was keen to deal with cases of love, hatred, the subjugation of jinn etc. Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib states that the Maulānā was also *mujāz* (appointed as a *khalīfah* and given permission to accept *bay'ah* from others) in the *tarīqah* by his Shaykh, Hadrat Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Maulānā Hidāyat Sāhib *rahimahullāh* passed away at the age of thirty-five and a half, in the village of Gaurakhpūr, during the month of Jumādā 1252 A.H. Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was only seven years old when the affectionate hand of his father was taken away from him. The young orphan was brought under the loving care of his grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh.¹⁰

¹⁰ Becoming an orphan and being taken care of by his grandfather are two coincidental Sunnahs which are strongly connected to the day on which he was born [he was born on a Monday].

Apart from Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh, Maulwī Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib had two other sons. One was a few years older than Hadrat Maulānā. His name was Maulwī 'Ināyat Aḥmad and he taught Hadrat Maulānā the primary books of Persian. The other brother, Sa'id Aḥmad, was younger than Hadrat Maulānā. He passed away at the age of nine, after the demise of his father. The three biological brothers had two sisters. One of them was their biological sister. She was the eldest and her name was Fasīḥā. The other girl, Amatul Haqq, was a step-sister.

CHILDHOOD

It is not easy to obtain detailed information about a person's childhood. The reason for this is that, no matter how great a person may be – whether in a worldly or religious sense – during his childhood no one is aware of the full extent to which the branches of his merits would spread, nor do they know how far its fragrance and shadow would reach. Only during brief childhood moments can one identify the person's potential greatness.

To explain this, one may use the analogy of a farmer who carefully nurtures the saplings in his orchard, taking extreme care to protect them from the harms of evil eyes in order for it to grow into strong fruit-bearing trees. Though one of these trees may grow into a visibly exceptional tree and bear the best of fruit, he would be unable to provide a detailed description of its progress – from its early stages up until reaching its full potential. The reason for this is that, during its early stages, it was not written upon the branches of this tree that it was to become the farmer's pride and joy at some point in the future.

If one were to look at the pages of the biographies of the pious personalities of *Dīn* and of our famous predecessors, the accuracy of this statement would become obvious. The authors wrote in great detail about the lives of all the senior personalities, but if they were

to be asked about the condition of these same personalities at the time when they were in the arms of their affectionate mothers, being patted to sleep, they would not be able to respond with much more than silence.

The veracity of this statement can be seen in the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His greatness, loftiness, high position and grand status warrant a detailed account of his childhood, yet not one of the authors and biographers was able to produce one tenth of it. In fact, they could not even produce one thousandth of it.

If we were to inquire about the childhood of some of the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم who were extremely close to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, those who were relatively close to him, as well as those who were his servants and attendants, then this reality would become absolutely clear.

In short, Divine Will and the Norm of Allāh ﷻ demand that the childhood of His close servants should remain obscure, as opposed to the latter part of their lives, in order to prevent the enemies from taking the opportunity to harm them, and to prevent those who are affectionate towards them from seizing the opportunity to assist or aid them before the appointed time. This anonymity and obscurity during their childhood thus prevents their contemporaries, and even their parents and guardians, from remembering all the traits and mannerisms they presented as children. When such details are requested by the attendants and associates of the great personality later on in his life, they are therefore not able to recall much or to present much detail regarding his youth.

Consequently, I could not obtain as much detail about Hadrat Maulānā's childhood as I would have liked, despite all the efforts I made in this regard. However, the proverb "*Childhood reveals the man*" rings true. It could certainly be gauged from the very beginning that Allāh ﷻ had already placed excellent habits and admirable qualities in the person who was to become the imām of

the '*ulamā*' of his time. Allāh ﷻ had embellished him with these qualities from an early age. He proved to be Allāh-fearing and devoted to worship. He displayed sound temperament – possessing admirable qualities such as kind-heartedness, determination, modesty, pleasantness, chastity and patience. He was independent, cultured, well-mannered and forbearing. Hadrat had a natural aversion towards traits such as stubbornness, persistence, obstinacy, childishness, unruly behaviour and mischief making and the habits of undisciplined children.

During the first six to seven years of his life, he was spoilt and doted upon by his family and at the tender age of eight he was orphaned. If he were any other child, this would have caused him to develop bad habits and character traits, but there was no sign of such qualities in him.

He commenced his studies under the affectionate tutorship of Miyājī Qutb Bakhsb Sāhib Gangohī – a maternal relative. His teacher spoke in glowing terms of his intelligence, quick-wittedness, incredible memory and his ability to retain information in a short span of time. However, though affectionate and informal, Miyājī was not heedless of his role as a teacher and was strict with his students when necessary.

Hadrat rahimahullāh was never mischievous in front of Miyājī, even though his teacher would often joke with them. On one such occasion, Miyājī teasingly smelt the mouths of each student and asked: "What did you eat today?" Every student relayed to him what they had eaten, whereupon he remarked: "Couldn't you bring some food for me?" After this incident, Hadrat made it a habit not to eat his food at home. He secretly placed it in his pocket, or carried it at his side and would give it to Miyājī the moment he entered the *maktab*.

No one at home realised that he was giving his share of the meal to

his teacher. It was only when they noticed his sticky pockets and sides that they asked him for an explanation. Only then was his secret exposed.

This incident clearly demonstrates the admirable qualities of selflessness, lack of greed, service to others and eagerness to please which Hadrat rahimahullāh possessed. He displayed respect and admiration towards those who imparted knowledge unto him. It also demonstrates how, from an early age, he was able to understand a message which was simply alluded to (that his teacher was hungry) and that he was willing to do something about it. This is a clear sign of leadership. These are all qualities which few young men exhibit – let alone a child.

From the very onset of his studies, Hadrat rahimahullāh developed the habit of learning the moral behind every story and bearing it in mind for the future. A perfect example of this was when, at the age of four or five, his mother once gave an equal share of milk to both him and his elder brother, Maulwī 'Ināyat Aḥmad Sāhib. Due to his tender age and lack of understanding at that point, Hadrat rahimahullāh insisted that he wanted more. His elder brother paid no attention to his plight. Instead, after drinking his own share, he drank Hadrat's share as well.

This incident passed, but Hadrat had learnt at this tender age that insistence, obstinacy and stubbornness are all to one's own disadvantage and only leads to one's own loss. Consequently, for as long as he was alive, he never showed signs of obstinacy and stubbornness again. He would happily accept whatever he received and would be pleased with it. In fact, he used to personally relate that: "From the incident of the milk I learnt that obstinacy simply causes one to be deprived of your own share as well."

*There is a medal of courage in youth
for the one who restrains his desires.*

*He spent his whole life drinking mere water
without the need to go hunting (for luxuries).*

Over a period of four years, Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh suffered from a prolonged fever. During the course of his illness and treatment, the doctor instructed him to eat only moongh and to abstain from all other foods. Consequently, he confined himself to moongh for this entire period. He would either have moongh dhal, roti made of moongh or mashed moongh. He continued eating this without becoming tired of it. He never complained about it nor adopted the expression of a sulking child and he did not express the slightest desire to eat anything else. He did not once show any irritation at the fact that he could only eat one type of food.

This may be an unimportant incident, but from this one can gauge the valuable qualities of steadfastness, determination, abstinence, contentment, patience, forbearance, lofty courage and unwavering commitment which Allāh ﷻ had placed in him. These very qualities of steadfastness, determination, patience and forbearance were the qualities which he had to resort to later in his life when he needed to become completely engrossed in Islam in order to fulfil the difficult tasks of propagating the Sharī'ah and reviving the Sunnah. To restrict oneself to one type of food – no matter how tasty it may be – is not only beyond the capability and tolerance of small children, but even beyond that of mature adults. The Banī Isrā'īl's inability to restrict themselves to the delicious, heavenly foods of manna and salwā portrays this subject very clearly.

Allāh ﷻ says:

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا
تَنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا

*"And remember when you said: 'O Mūsā! We cannot endure one
kind of food (always). So pray for us to your Lord, that He may*

produce for us of that which grows from the earth – vegetables, cucumbers, wheat, pulse and onions.”

(Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 61)

Hadrat rahimahullāh was six or seven years old when he was playing outside with his cousins, ‘Abdullāh and Muḥammad Hasan. Their playing and wandering led them to the neighbouring village of Ambheta. Ambheta is about five or six miles away from Gangoh, but the boys did not even realise that they were straying so far away from home because they were completely involved in their childhood frolics. Accompanied by his cousins and enjoying the antics of their childhood, they were able to cover this distance of five to six miles while engrossed in their playful chatting and joking. Absorbed in the enthusiasm of childhood and the company of children his own age, his legs never felt the distance nor did he realise the length of time that had elapsed since leaving Gangoh. When he noticed the fact that it was almost night time and that he was now in Ambheta – very far from home – he was overcome with shame and self-consciousness.

He felt intensely embarrassed and, not only his forehead, but his entire body was bathed in perspiration. His internal condition could be deduced from his downcast face and lowered gaze. Many thoughts were running through his mind as he walked with his cousins. He was in a daze and absorbed in thoughts of his cousins and their plan to go to their maternal aunt’s house. What was he going to do? How could he go to a stranger’s house, have a meal with them and spend the night there? It was already late and there was no way that they could walk back to Gangoh at this hour. Although he was plagued by these concerns, he could not muster the courage to walk back to Gangoh by himself. He was compelled to spend the night with his cousins and returned home to Gangoh the following morning.

Spending the night away from home, without informing his family,

must have caused them immense concern. It is obvious that they must have spent their night in a state of great anxiety. When the "delight of his mother" returned home the following day, she asked him what had happened and he related the entire story to her – exactly as it had transpired. He told her: "I did not want to go to the house, but 'Abdullāh made me go with them and I was forced to have a meal in someone else's house. Only I know how ashamed I was that I was having a meal in a stranger's home. The truth is, I did not eat the meal – the meal ate me".

Hadrat rahimahullāh was about six and half years old when another strange incident took place. This incident clearly displays his spiritual excellence of absolute reliance (*tawakkul*) and demonstrates the physical excellence which he possessed during his childhood as well as his acceptance in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ. Hadrat was extremely attached to ṣalāh from a very young age. No matter how preoccupied he was with the playful activities of his childhood, he would stop all these activities when it was time for ṣalāh. In most cases he would perform his ṣalāh in congregation in the Musjid. Since his early days of play and amusement he had understood this lesson: "One must always be mindful of the Resurrection. The person who understands his profit and loss is the one who shall succeed."

Once, Hadrat rahimahullāh was walking about on the outskirts of the village. He headed towards the open fields. It was a peaceful evening. The cool breeze was refreshing his heart. The sun that illuminates the world was on the verge of setting and the hearts of the servants of Allāh ﷻ were informed of the time to prostrate before Him and to head towards the Musjid, because the time of *maghrib* was approaching. Although Hadrat rahimahullāh was only six years old, he was like a devoted Shaykh in his remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. He immediately turned towards his home. He had the stems of two flowers in his hand and was walking swiftly towards the Musjid. He went home first and told his mother: "Mother, here,

take these stems quickly! I am going to perform salāh in the Musjid". He hastened to the Musjid and found that the congregation had already commenced. When he went to the well to perform wudū', he found that the water pitcher was empty. This caused him even more delay. He became anxious and lowered the pail into the well in order to draw some water. Even though his hand was on the rope and pail, his heart was worrying about his salāh. His eyes were on the well, but his mind was concerned about joining the congregation. This was a distressing situation! His hands and feet became swollen. The rope became tangled around his legs and Hadrat rahimahullāh suddenly fell into the well.

Just imagine how deep the bottom of the well must have been and look at Allāh's protection! He was like a second Yūsuf [the first was Hadrat Yūsuf عليه السلام who was thrown into a well by his brothers], but not even a hair on his head was wet because of his fall. By some miracle the water had spread out its lap, embraced him, pushed him gently towards the jutting root of a tree and seated him safely upon it.

Hadrat's maternal uncle, Muhammad Shafī' Sāhib, relayed that the pail and rope had fallen into the well with him. The pail had overturned and Hadrat rahimahullāh was seated on it. As if he were seated on the soft cushion of a canoe, he comfortably floated around in the water.

The difference between these two narrations does not affect our actual purpose because in either case it is clear to see how Allāh ﷻ had provided him with Divine Protection. Without the use of any outward means, Allāh ﷻ did not permit any harm to befall him.

Only one *rak'at* of the *maghrib salāh* had been performed when the people heard the sound of his falling. It was difficult for them to complete the two *rak'ats*. The moment they made *salām*, everybody rushed towards the well. Hadrat's paternal

grandmother's brother, Sayyid Fayḍ 'Alī Sāhib, exclaimed: "The child appears to be Rashīd Aḥmad."

A large crowd gathered around the well. In a state of distress their eyes darted between the one another and the well, wondering how they were going to save him. Then they heard a voice from inside the well saying: "Don't worry. I am sitting very comfortably here!" A large stool was lowered into the well. When they removed him, they noticed that – apart from a slight scratch on his little toe – he had suffered no other injury on his entire body.

From the above incident, the following qualities clearly come to the fore: He did not become distressed in the face of a calamity. Remaining seated at ease, he waited patiently for the ṣalāh to be completed and waited for relief from Allāh ﷻ. He was able to put the hearts of others at ease and placed his absolute trust and reliance in Allāh ﷻ. He bore the difficulties that are associated with acts of worship [referring to the performance of *wudū'* in this case] without uttering a single word of complaint. If, today, a child could possess only one of these qualities, he would be considered most fortunate. Yet again our attention is drawn to the saying: "A gifted child reveals the man inside him" and the proverb: "Childhood reveals the man."

After this incident, Hadrat Maulānā's father, Maulwī Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib, arrived in Gangoh on an eight month leave from Calcutta. He took the exams of all the children in the *maktab*. Hadrat Maulānā was also part of this group. All the children were students of the same Miyājī and had learnt the rules of ṣalāh from him. Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib realised that all those who had learnt the *at-tahīyyāt* under Miyājī, were reading the word *barakātuhū* (بَرَكَاتُهُ) as *barrakātuhū* (بَرَّكَاتُهُ). He corrected them and asked them to read the word as *barakātuhū*. All the children, except for Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib, refused stubbornly and said: "We will read it as we were taught by our teacher." Hadrat

Maulānā lowered his head and said: "We have to accept whatever is correct, no matter who tells it to us." Coincidentally, Miyājī had also learnt the *at-tahīyyāt* incorrectly.

It was as if the following statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣāhib's disposition and second nature:

الحكمة ضالة المؤمن أخذها حيث وجدها

*"Wisdom is the lost item of a believer.
He accepts it from wherever he finds it."*

Consequently, throughout his life it remained a part of his disposition to follow the truth and to abstain from insolence and obstinacy completely. In other words, he was always in search of the truth and constantly strove towards it. No matter what the circumstances were and no matter who the bearer was, when any morsel of guidance was exposed to him, he did not consider it beneath his dignity to accept it and submit to it.

This journey [from Calcutta to Gangoh] was to be the final journey that Maulānā Hidāyat Aḥmad Ṣāhib would make to his home in Gangoh. He spent six months of his eight months leave in Gangoh and, while making preparations to depart once again, he bid farewell to this world. When he returned to his temporary abode and earthly hometown, it was as though he was making preparations for the lengthy journey of the Hereafter and, before he could complete his journey [of this world] he turned towards his eternal homeland. He made the abode of eternity his place of residence and was buried in the place where he was born. To Allāh do we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Maulānā's mother was a chaste and pious woman, an ardent worshipper and a *walīyyah* (female *walī*) of Allāh ﷻ. Despite being a woman, she was not of weak faith – as were so many other

women. She never allowed any defect with regard to Islam and *īmān* to creep into the hearts of her children. She was firm in her Islamic beliefs and was naturally averse to, and afraid of, charms and spells. She was a morally upright woman. Why should she not be? After all, she was destined to bear and breast-feed the Qutb of the time – the personality through whom thousands of people would obtain guidance, righteousness, firmness and steadfastness in *dīn*.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh once related an incident from his childhood. He said: "My mother used to tell me: 'Rashīd Aḥmad, when you were a child, I saw the Ilāh Bakhsh jinn. I saw him coming to your bed and standing next to it. He said to me: 'Go to a certain grave and place a perfumed cotton wool on it or else I will kill your son.' I said to him: 'Very well, kill him. He is lying right there in front of you!'"

Hadrat rahimahullāh continued: "The graves of Shāh Dā'ūd Sāhib and Shāh Sādiq Sāhib are in Gangoh. There is a platform at these graves where sheets in the name of Ilāh Bakhsh are spread and perfumed cotton-wool is placed. My mother used to tell me that, whenever she saw Ilāh Bakhsh, he would make these threats to her, but she used to give the same reply to him every time: 'I will never place the sheet and cotton-wool on the graves. If you think you can kill my son, kill him.' Despite this clear and explicit challenge to him, he could not harm you in the least. Let alone kill you – he could not even terrorize you!"

Hadrat Maulānā was of sound heart and was devoted to the Sunnah since childhood. He never allowed any picture of animate objects into his house. Hadrat rahimahullāh had a step sister [they shared the same father] by the name of Amatul Haqq who was four and half years younger than him. She used to play with dolls when she was an infant. Whenever Hadrat rahimahullāh used to return home, he would break the dolls and throw them away.

In short, the signs and indications of the lofty level which Hadrat

Maulānā *rahimahullāh* was to reach in the latter part of his life were clearly visible since his childhood. Only a person who was endowed with deep insight could understand these signs and identify this in him. Hadrat himself related in *Mawā'iz Hasanah*: "I am relating to you about myself: Allāh ﷻ had blessed me with conviction in my childhood. I would be playing with the boys and the time of Jumu'ah would approach. I would stop playing and depart for Jumu'ah. I would say to the other boys: 'I heard my uncle saying to me that if a person misses three Jumu'ahs (in a place where Jumu'ah is *fard*), he is recorded as a hypocrite'. I say to the people: 'You are Muslims after all. You most certainly have conviction in Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Why, then, are you so heedless?'"

From the above, one can gauge his internal potential and gift of *nisbat* (affinity with Allāh ﷻ). Many people are prepared to lose their kingdoms in order to attain these heights, but still they are unable to acquire it.

When Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was seven years old, he had to bear the first pain of losing his father. A few years later, he had to bear the pain of losing his older brother, Sa'īd Aḥmad, whose back and hands had become paralysed. Hadrat always remained obedient to his mother. Though he looked up to his grandfather – who was his tutor – he considered his affectionate maternal uncle, Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib, to be his father. He spent all his energy on his studies and remained engrossed in self-reformation and rectification through an innate desire to please Allāh ﷻ and did not need anyone to explain his work to him or to scold him in this regard.

TRAINING AND COMPLETING SHARĪ'AH STUDIES

Hadrat Maulānā was seven years and a few months old at the time of his father's demise. When the affectionate hand of his father was raised from him, his grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh, took care of him. Hadrat rahimahullāh had four maternal uncles, the eldest of which was Maulānā Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib. He also later became Hadrat's father-in-law. The second maternal uncle was Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib. The third uncle was Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib – the father of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib – and the youngest of his uncles was Maulwī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib, who was only eight years older than Hadrat.

From these four, Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib had intense love for his orphaned nephew. In fact, it was as if Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib saw no difference between Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr [his own son] and Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib. This close attachment created an intensely strong bond between Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and Hadrat rahimahullāh. This was due to the fact that Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr, who had taken the place of Hadrat's father, never allowed any distress to afflict his broken-hearted, orphaned nephew.

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr was Hadrat's maternal cousin and also the foster brother of Hadrat's wife. In other words, he and Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib's mother were breast-fed by the same woman. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and Hadrat Maulānā were very close to one another. He was only two years younger than Hadrat rahimahullāh. They played together in their childhood and remained together as close friends throughout their lives.

From his childhood days, Hadrat was known for his eagerness to participate in activities which required bravery and courage. He had a natural aversion towards futile play and amusement. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib, who was Hadrat's childhood friend, used to say:

“Whatever status Miyā Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad enjoys at present is all before our eyes [clearly visible]. Even during the initial stages of his life, he would converse with absolute decorum and consideration. I do not remember Maulwī Sāhib ever taking part in futile play and amusement. Even if he had to join his friends upon their insistence, he would sit aside from them and say: ‘Bhāi! You all play, I will look after your clothes’. Moreover, I never saw him laughing aloud as children normally do. Although Maulwī Sāhib was of our age, we all looked upon him with awe, just as a ruler would be admired by his subjects. If we were ever engaged in any futile activity or mischief and Maulānā were to arrive, we would all stop whatever we were doing and sit with utter respect.”

Even as a child Hadrat had a very sweet voice, but he would never sing nonsensical poems nor would you ever see him singing along while walking next to the roads – as is the habit of children. Because of his sweet voice, his friends would constantly ask him to sing something, but most of the time he would refuse. However, upon their insistence, he would sing a *naẓm* (composition) – especially the one relaying the story of Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh*. He would sing it in a beautiful tone and captivate the assembly. While singing these poems, the audience would become completely enraptured. They would be overcome with emotion and tears would involuntarily well in their eyes. Often they would be on the verge of swooning and losing consciousness.

While he was still very young, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* studied the Persian book *Kārnāl* under his maternal uncle, Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib. He also taught the book *Musalam ath-Thubūt* in Persian. Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib was thus both his maternal uncle and teacher. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was extremely respectful and considerate towards him. Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib often praised his nephew's intelligence, insight, perception and understanding. According to some narrations, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* also studied some Persian under Maulwī Muḥammad Gauth Sāhib.

After completing his studies in Persian, he developed the desire to study Arabic. He studied the primary books of Arabic grammar (*nahw*) and etymology (*ṣarf*) under Maulwī Muḥammad Bakhsh Sāhib Rāmpūrī.

Rāmpūr was the original hometown of Ḥadrat's paternal forefathers and of his grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh. His spiritual training was therefore transferred to Rāmpūr. Maulwī Muḥammad Bakhsh Sāhib Rāmpūrī was a most affectionate teacher. Ḥadrat received the permission (*ijāzat*) for *Hizb al-Bahr* through the shortest narrations from Maulwī Muḥammad Bakhsh Sāhib Rāmpūrī. It is possible that he received *ijāzat* for *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* from him as well.

When Ḥadrat completed the primary books of Arabic grammar and etymology, Maulwī Muḥammad Bakhsh Sāhib encouraged him to complete his studies in Arabic and other religious sciences. He told him that it was necessary to travel for the sake of acquiring knowledge and suggested that he should go to Delhi to complete his studies. This relocation took place in 1261 A.H. when Ḥadrat was seventeen years old. He was studying *Hidāyatun Nahw* (a book on Arabic grammar) at the time.


Ḥadrat travelled to Delhi and commenced his studies under the tutelage of Maulwī Qādī Aḥmad ad-Dīn Sāhib Punjābī Jhelamī. As the capital of India, Delhi was the centre of knowledge at the time. The lush, fruit-bearing tree of *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*¹¹, written by Ḥadrat Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh Shāh Walī-ullāh *rahimahullāh*, was by now in full bloom. The authentic deputies of Ḥadrat Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib Muḥaddith Dehlawī and his grandsons, Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Maulwī Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, were the centres of attention and focus in Delhi. Unexpectedly, these two personalities

¹¹ *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* (The Absolute Proof of Allāh) is the *magnum opus* of Ḥadrat Shāh Walī-ullāh *rahimahullāh*.

made the intention to emigrate and in 1257 A.H. (probably during Dhū al-Qa'dah) they departed. Darkness pervaded Delhi and a large group of people decided to accompany them to Arabia.

Apart from Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib and Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib, the only other person from the Dehlawī *khānqāh* who remained behind was Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib¹². He was the teacher in charge at Ajmeri Gate Arabic High School at the time. Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib found it extremely difficult to be separated from those who had emigrated [to Arabia]. Consequently, he resorted to secret plans and obtained leave for one year. However, he could not join them immediately. Eventually he left his hometown in Rajab 1258 A.H. and reached Makkah on the 1st of Dhū al-Hijjah. After completing his visit to the Haramayn Sharīfayn (Makkah and Madīnah), he returned to Delhi before the year had elapsed. In those days, it was considered remarkable to cover such a long distance in such a short space of time. Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* managed to secure this one year sabbatical by having his wages reduced by half. Upon his return, he resumed teaching at the same *madrasah* once again.

Due to the fact that his leave had just expired, he could not visit his hometown upon his return from the Hijāz [Makkah and Madīnah].

¹² Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the father of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was the principal (teacher in charge) of *Madrasah Islāmīyyah* Deoband. Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* studied almost all the sciences under Maulānā Rashīd ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in Delhi. Maulānā Rashīd ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the famous and most righteous student of A'lā Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. He was an erudite scholar ('*allamah*') in almost every field. He was particularly proficient with the beliefs of the Shī'ah. We heard that he also studied some rational sciences (*ma'qūlāt*) under Maulwī Qalandar Bakhsh Sāhib. Allāh  knows best.

He proceeded directly to Delhi. When the *madrasah* closed for its annual holiday in Dhū al-Hijjah, he departed for his hometown, Nānautah, in the district Sahāranpūr. When the holidays came to an end, he took Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*] with him to Delhi so that he could study there.

Hadrat Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib is the famous teacher of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib. Hadrat had the opportunity to remain under his tutelage day and night and to drink from this fountain of knowledge. In 1260 A.H., Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Maulānā Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*] had accompanied Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib to Delhi, but Hadrat Imām Rabbānī only arrived in Delhi in 1261 A.H.

Initially, in his search for a place where he could obtain convincing answers and find tranquillity and peace of mind, Imām Rabbānī attended the lessons of several different '*ulamā*'. However, Allāh ﷻ had willed for him to find the company of pious personalities who possessed 'one heart' and 'two bodies'. They were to be his companions for the rest of his life on this earth, and in the eternal abode of the Hereafter. Consequently, his heart did not become attached to anyone. He found the brevity of some teachers to be defective and the lengthy details of others to be tedious. Some teachers could not provide sufficient answers to his doubts and he did not feel any affinity towards others. Thus he remained dissatisfied.

It was during the course of this roaming from here to there – looking and searching – that he coincidentally presented himself before Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib. He attended his lessons and experienced an instant attachment from the moment he arrived. He felt that he had found the highly capable teacher which he had been searching for. He possessed an incisive disposition and Allāh-endowed intelligence. As a rule, a highly capable teacher would search for intelligent students and it is the norm that intelligent

students would be on the look-out for highly capable teachers. Thus, Allāh ﷻ provided a means of tranquillity to both teacher and student.

Within a few days, Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib and Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib became bosom class mates and their friendship was to continue forever.

Those who were present at the time unanimously agree that Allāh ﷻ had blessed these two lamps of knowledge with impeccable intelligence. They used to recite the books *Mīr Zāhid*, *Qāḍī*, *Sidrā* and *Shams Bāzighah* as fluently as a *Hāfīz* [of the Qur'ān] would recite the *manzil*. If they needed an explanation for any word, they would ask for it. Other than that, there was no need to even translate the texts [because they understood the content so well].

Maulānā's other students felt that he was merely teaching without checking whether they understood the work and that he was merely turning pages with the intention of completing the books. One of the students voiced this objection, but Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib replied: "Miyā! No student studying under me can proceed without comprehension and understanding." And this was certainly a fact. No student studying under the Maulānā could proceed without understanding. He had the ability of identifying whether or not a student had understood the content by merely listening to the manner in which the student would read the text.

Hadrat rahimahullāh was always ahead of the others in his work and distinguished from his class mates. Because of his Allāh-endowed intelligence and capabilities, he was afforded special attention and affection by every teacher. If for any reason he did not attend a class due to illness, his affectionate teacher would go to his room to visit him.

Within a few years, he completed all the prescribed sciences in

Delhi. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* also studied the rational sciences under the tutelage of Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat studied Ahādīth under Qudwatul 'Ulamā' Zubdatus Sulahā' Hadrat Maulānā al-Maulwī Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib Muhājir Madanī *rahimahullāh*. Shāh Sāhib was a great personality and was known throughout the world for his knowledge of the Sharī'ah and Tarīqah. He was considered to be the select among the 'ulamā' and sulahā' (those engaged in spiritual reformation and rectification) and was a well-known jurist and scholar of Ahādīth. The marginal notes to *Ibn Mājah*, titled *Injāh al-Hājah*, were written by him.

During the Indian Mutiny Shāh Sāhib emigrated to Madīnah and settled there. This was a few years before his demise. He spent most of his time there in the Haram, completely engrossed in meditation. Out of respect and fear, he would sit at a distance from the Raudah. Whenever visitors to the Raudah would make any noise, he would get up trembling, approach them and address them in an extremely gentle tone saying: "Brothers, do not make a noise. Rasūlullāh ﷺ is present."

He used to conduct lessons in Madīnah, teaching Ahādīth. The 'ulamā' of the Hijāz, as well as the great Hadīth scholars from other parts of the world, acknowledged his academic acumen and his in-depth knowledge of the science of Hadīth. On the 6th of Muharram al-Harām 1295 A.H., he passed away in the neighbourhood of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He was sixty years old at the time. He was buried next to Qubbah-e-'Uthmānī in Jannatul Baqī'.

Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib¹³ *rahimahullāh* was an adherent of the

¹³ Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī's grandfather, Shaykh Saṭīyy al-Qadr, was living in Sirhind, a famous town in Patiala. When the Sikhs took over this town, his grandfather, together with his wife and children emigrated to Muṣṭafā Ābād, i.e. Rāmpūr, district Murādābād. Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī was born there on 25 Sha'bān 1239 A.H. He used to go

Naqshbandīyyah Mujaddidīyyah *silsilah* of his forefather, Mujaddid Alf Thānī Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Sirhindī rahimahullāh. He was a *mujāz* [appointed as *khalīfah* with permission to accept *bay'ah* from others] of his father, Hadrat Shaykh Abū Sa'īd rahimahullāh. His genealogical lineage and link in *sulūk* meets with that of Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī rahimahullāh on the eighth level. It reads thus: Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Abī Sa'īd ibn Safīyy al-Qadr ibn 'Azīz al-Qadr ibn Muḥammad 'Isā ibn Sayf ad-Dīn ibn Muḥammad Ma'sūm ibn Ahmad al-'Umri as-Sirhindī rahimahumullāh.

The genealogical lineage of Hadrat Imām at-Tarīqah al-Mujaddidīyyah rahimahullāh reads as follows: Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Aḥad ibn Zayn al-'Ābidīn ibn ash-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn ash-Shaykh Muḥammad – eventually leading up to Nāsir ibn 'Abdillāh ؑ. Apart from all the other excellent qualities which Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh possessed, he enjoyed the honourable position of having a noble lineage, for he was an 'Umri Fārūqī [descendent of Hadrat 'Umar al-Fārūq ؑ].

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh studied most of the books of Aḥādīth under the tutelage of his father and spiritual mentor, Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Dehlawī rahimahullāh. His *isnād* (chain of transmitters) is mentioned in the book, *al-Yāni'al-Janīy*, as running through different chains.

A concise listing follows:

to Delhi regularly for the sake of acquiring knowledge of the Sharī'ah and *tarīqah*. He benefited tremendously from Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib rahimahullāh. When Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib passed away, the 'ulamā' and pious elders of Delhi insisted that both blood brothers – Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī – leave Mustafā Ābād and settle down in Delhi where they were to inhabit and revive the *khānqāh* which was lying deserted.

He studied *Mu'attā* Imām Mālik, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasa'ī and Ibn Mājah from cover to cover under his father. He studied *Bukhārī* (both reading it as well as listening to its recitation) under Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and his father, Shāh Abū Sa'īd Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, were both students of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn ash-Shāh Walī-ullāh ibn ash-Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm al-'Umrī *rahimahumullāh*. Thus, both his chains of transmitters of *Hadīth* meet with that of Shāh Walī-ullāh *rahimahullāh* on the third level.

He read *Mishkāt [al-Maṣābīh]* to *Hadrat* Makhsūs Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. *Hadrat* was the son of Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib ibn Shāh Walī-ullāh *rahimahullāh*. When he was in Madīnah, he read some portions of *Bukhārī* to ash-Shaykh al-Hāfīz al-Hāj Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Anṣārī as-Sindī al-Madanī *rahimahullāh*. These portions were read to him *tabarrukan* (as a source of blessings). Hāfīz Sāhib gave him *ijāzat* for all the *Ṣiḥāh* (the most authentic collections of *Hadīth*) and gave him a hand-written *sanad* (chain of transmission). While in Madīnah, Shaykh Ismā'īl ibn Idrīs ar-Rūmī *rahimahullāh* gave him *ijāzat* for the narration of the *Aḥādīth* of the *Ṣiḥāh*.

From the above it is clear that he had five teachers in *Hadīth*:

- (1) His father, *Hadrat* Abū Sa'īd, the grandson of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz *rahimahullāh*.
- (2) Shāh Is-hāq, the son of Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn.
- (3) Shāh Makhsūs Allāh Anṣārī.
- (4) Hāfīz Muḥammad 'Ābid.
- (5) Shaykh Ismā'īl ibn Idrīs ar-Rūmī *rahimahullāh*, who was originally from Macedonia and an *'allāmah* of his time.

If *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī is included in this chain of transmitters and joined with the *isnād* of Shāh Walī-ullāh¹⁴ Fārūqī

¹⁴ *Hujjatullāh* Shāh Walī-ullāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* had five sons. From his first wife he had Maulwī Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib. His second wife was a *sayyidah* (descendant of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) from

rahimahullāh, then the *Hadīth isnād* of the students of *Ḥadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī rahimahullāh* will be complete. This *isnād* leads up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and is well-known to every Maulwī in the Indian Subcontinent.

In the class of Shāh *Sāhib rahimahullāh*, and with regard to their intellectual acumen, these two gardens of *dīn* [referring to *Ḥadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī* and *Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī*] outshone the rest of their class mates. It is well-known that, out of all his students, he had the most love for *Ḥadrat Maulānā Gangohī* and *Ḥadrat Maulānā Nānautwī* and from among his *murīds*, the person who received the most attention was *Ḥadrat Maulānā al-Maulwī Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib Deobandī*, the principal of *Madrasah 'Āliyah Islāmīyyah*.

On one occasion, *Ḥadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh* was suffering from a severe bout of scabies and could not attend classes for a few days.

Saunīpat. He had four sons from her. They were: Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn, Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir, and Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī. He also had one daughter by the name of Amatul 'Azīz. Shāh Walī-ullāh *Sāhib* got her married to the son of Shāh Muḥammad 'Āshiq who was his maternal cousin and most senior *khalīfah*. Maulwī Shaykh Muḥammad *Sāhib* had no children. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz had only three daughters. The eldest daughter had two sons, namely Shāh Is-ḥāq and Shāh Ya'qūb. They emigrated in 1260 A.H. Shāh Rafī' ad-Dīn *Sāhib* had five sons and one daughter by the name of Amatullāh. She had two sons, namely Sayyid Nāsīr ad-Dīn Saunīpatī and Sayyid Nāsīr ad-Dīn Saunīpatī. Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir *Sāhib* had just one daughter by the name of Zaynab. Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī *Sāhib* had two daughters – Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm – and one son, Maulānā Ismā'īl Shahīd, who was the companion of Sayyid Mujaddid Barelwī. Maulānā Ismā'īl Shahīd was married to the daughter of his cousin (Zaynab). Her name was Kulthūm. They had a son whose name was Maulwī Muḥammad 'Umar. He suffered from leprosy and passed away. From this entire lineage, only Maulwī Sayyid Aḥmad *Sāhib* and the wife of 'Abd as-Salām *Sāhib* still remains.

When Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī heard about this, he went to visit him. He started crying when he saw the pain which his student was experiencing. From this incident we can gauge the level of love and affection which the teachers had for Hadrat Maulānā during his student days.

The Gangohī and Nānautwī sun and moon spent their entire study period closely together with a singular purpose. At times, the two would engage in a discussion with one another regarding a particular issue. Such a discussion would often continue for several hours. Their discussions and debates would be observed by others with great enthusiasm. The teachers would also listen to their discussions with enthusiasm and wonder, directing their full attention to them. Sometimes people would muster the courage to attend, thus resulting in a gathering of both the learned and the laymen. Fine and intricate points would be put forward from both sides. Upon hearing both sides of the discussion, a teacher would only, on very rare occasions, be able to pass a verdict that Qāsim could be surpassed in his intelligence, or that Rashīd Aḥmad was incorrect on a specific issue.

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to relate: "Initially when we were in Delhi, we used to study under various teachers, but we were never satisfied. Some teacher's lessons were too brief, while others could not provide answers to our doubts. However, when we started attending the classes of Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, we felt satisfied and were able to complete our books within a short period. It was as though our *ustād* 'dissolved' the 'medicine' for us and made us drink it [so that it went down easily]." Hadrat Maulānā also used to say: "In those days, there were many good teachers in Delhi. But a teacher who fully understood the meaning of each lesson was able to address the different aspects of a lesson and was able to put it across in a convincing manner to the students. These qualities were only found in our *ustād* Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib and in our other *ustād*, Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahumallāh*."

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* also had the honour of studying under Hadrat Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat would often relate the stories of his student days in Delhi and captivate his audience with his memories and recollections.

Maulwī Wilāyat 'Alī Sāhib related that Hadrat Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd Sāhib had written a refutation of a hundred of Maulānā Is-hāq Sāhib's *masā'il* and that this book had been printed. Upon hearing this, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said: "It is unlikely that Shāh Sāhib would write in response to it. He may possibly differ with him on a few *masā'il*, but I do not believe that he would differ with him on all of them and that he would write a response to it. He did not even have time to conduct assemblies and so forth and for that reason also conducted few lessons. He was extremely engrossed in his work. A person by the name of Māshā Allāh Khān had always remained with him and used to attend his assembly (*majlis*). Oddly, this person used to shave off his beard. Someone said to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib: 'Māshā Allāh Khān shaves off his beard but is very regular in attending your *majlis*.' Shāh Sāhib replied in astonishment: 'O! Does he do that? When he comes I will stop him from doing it.' Khān Sāhib arrived a short while later and Shāh Sāhib asked him: 'Khān Sāhib! Do you shave your beard?' Khān Sāhib replied: 'Hadrat, my beard has not even appeared as yet.' Shāh Sāhib immediately believed him and said: 'Yes, this is the truth.' He then addressed those who complained about the Khān Sāhib saying: 'Miyā! His beard has not even appeared as yet.'"

Once a *bid'atī* went to the king and said: "Do not permit those Wahhābīs to come into the fort. You must see – I will call them and cause them to engage in a debate in your presence. Then you will hear, first hand, what fabricated beliefs they hold." The person then went to Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd Sāhib and some other '*ulamā*', who represented both sides. He informed them that they were to present themselves at the fort at a specific time. Shāh Sāhib promised to attend. His younger brother, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib had no

knowledge of this entire affair. When the vehicle arrived to collect Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib said to him: "Ḥadrat, are you going to the fort? No one from this *khānqāh* ever went to the fort. On the contrary, the kings used to always come here." Ḥadrat Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib said: "Very well, I will not go." Thus he sent the vehicle back.

In those days there were many disputes around the issue of *maulūd* (celebrating the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) in Delhi. Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib wrote an article on the permissibility of standing [while reading *salāt wa salām*], brought it to Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib and read it out to him. Shāh Sāhib said: "Yes, it is correct." Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib was also present. Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib addressed him as well and wanted his approval also. Shah 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib said: "Who says that it is not permissible to remember Rasūlullāh ﷺ while standing? Our rejection is on the basis that, if the purpose of standing is to show respect, then what is the reason for standing only at the time when talking about Rasūlullāh's ﷺ birth and not at other times? In fact, if the blessed birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ is remembered in any assembly apart from the *majlis* of *maulūd*, then no one stands up. You will have to provide the evidence for the issues which we are opposing." Upon hearing this, Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib agreed and said: "Yes, he is correct." The Muftī Sāhib was left confused. He took his article and departed.

After relating this incident, Ḥadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* said: "I am a student of both Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib and Muftī Sāhib. After this incident, Muftī Sāhib sealed his article and stored it away, never to take it out again."

This incident is mentioned to display the attention and affection that was shown to Ḥadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* by his teachers. Ḥadrat *rahimahullāh* had the occasion to go to Delhi after the Indian Mutiny and went to meet Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib. Muftī Sāhib afforded him tremendous affection and love and asked him about

the conditions back home. He also enquired about Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* saying: "What is Miyā Qāsim doing?" Hadrat replied: "He is working as an editor at a printing press and earns eight to ten rupees." Muftī Sāhib was extremely astonished. He began striking his thigh [to show his astonishment] and said: "Qāsim is so cheap! Qasim is so cheap!" He then remarked: "He has become a pauper. He has become a pauper!"

After their conversation, Muftī Sāhib said to him with intense love: "Miyā Rashīd, is it possible for us to eat together?" Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* declined in a respectful manner, but when Muftī Sāhib insisted, he joined him for a meal. Muftī Sāhib then said to him: "Miyā Rashīd! You are the best, for you have remained aloof from worldly engagements. Our employment was not lawful. We fully understood that it was not lawful, but we used to say that it is lawful under the compulsion of [imparting] knowledge."

Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib enquired about Hadrat Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* beliefs, upon which he related the previous incident of Muftī Sāhib and added: "Shāh Sāhib held a *maulūd* on one occasion and I also joined him. It was conducted as follows: We were sitting on the same straw mat of the Musjid which is normally laid out. No special carpets were laid out. No sweetmeats were distributed. No perfume was passed around and no other formalities followed. We opened a book and began reading something about Rasūlullāh ﷺ. We then got up and departed. This was the essence of our *maulūd*. But Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* did not participate – not even in this type of *maulūd*. Yet, today people are claiming that Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib used to hold *maulūd*."

A person went to Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib to obtain *ijāzat*

(permission) for Hadīth from him. He sat down to read the *atrāf*¹⁵. This person was a *qārī* and it is the practice of *qārīs* to read in a light tone so that the letters are pronounced correctly. I was also sitting near him, but he was reading in an extremely soft tone and I could not understand anything. I do not know what Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib could have heard. This person was busy reading, while on the other side, Shāh Sāhib opened some other book and began looking at it. He did not say to him: "You have come to read the *atrāf* to me, but you are reading in a tone that only you can hear." The person completed his reading and departed. Shāh Sāhib did not say anything to him.

Once, a person came to Shāh Sāhib to obtain his *ijāzat* for *Jalālayn* (a commentary of the Qur'ān). The person then realised that he did not know whether Shāh Sāhib, himself, had permission for *Jalālayn* or not. Thus he wrote a note asking him about this. Shāh Sāhib sent a reply to him stating: "I studied *Jalālayn* under Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and obtained *ijāzat* from him."

A *mas'alah*, written by Shāh Sāhib, was conveyed to Nawāb Quṭb ad-Dīn Khān Sāhib. He sent it back to Shāh Sāhib and wrote to him saying: "This *mas'alah* is written incorrectly. Out of respect for you, I cannot write it down. You must remove it yourself." When the *mas'alah* and the note reached Shāh Sāhib, he kissed it without hesitation.

After relating these incidents, Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* said: "These were extremely sanctified personalities. Nowadays the situation has become such that anyone who likes feels free to label them as *bid'atīs* and *Wahhābīs*. Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib did not

¹⁵ This refers to a person reading the first and last Hadīth of each Hadīth collection or of different chapters of one book. After reading these Aḥādīth, he obtains permission for Hadīth from the person to whom he read them. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

even know how to cause distress to anyone. He would say "Yes" to anything that any person told him. So, if anyone wrote anything, presented it to him, and asked him to sign it, he would respond in the affirmative. Thus, there is nothing to be astonished about if an article is attributed to Hadrat." Hadrat Qutb al-'Ālam [Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī] *rahimahullāh* observed strict etiquette with all his teachers and had a special affinity for all of them. He used to mention the achievements and excellent traits of his teachers very often. His eyes would become filled with tears whenever he spoke about them. Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was overcome by a certain condition for which he was excused. The qualities of having good thoughts about others (*husn-e-zann*), friendliness, politeness and, most of all, his complete engrossment in *Dīn* and utter humility, could be found to an intense degree in him. This gave the *bid'atīs* an opportunity to accomplish their plots.

Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a Shaykh who was extremely cautious, abstemious, pious, guarded, resolute and unaffected by 'conditions'. Consequently, Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* had a very strong bond with him and felt more attracted to his ways and mannerisms. He emulated and imitated him in these qualities.

On one occasion, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said: "As is the case with other Sufis, all types of conversations used to take place with Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib. However, the methodology of Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib was very clear. Upon the completion of the *tarāwīh*, Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib's Musjid used to have the recitation of the forty *rabbānā* (forty *du'ā's* which commence with the word *rabbānā*). For that reason Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib would not join in the last two *rak'ats* of the *tarāwīh*."

Once, a discussion about *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* took place. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said: "Although Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib was a very cautious person, he used to say that this issue cannot be

avoided.” Hadrat Shāh Sāhib’s caution and piety can be gauged from the following incident: Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib borrowed a certain book from Shāh Sāhib. The binding of this book was very weak because it was a very old book. Muftī Sāhib had it rebound and returned it to Shāh Sāhib. When he sent the person to return the book to Shāh Sāhib, Muftī Sāhib said to him: “You must inform Shāh Sāhib that the money which I used for binding this book was from the rental which I receive from the property which I inherited. I did not use my salary to pay for the binding.” (Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib was a government employee who filled the post of principal judge and his salary was considered impermissible according to the laws of jurisprudence). Shāh Sāhib accepted the book at the time and kept it aside. However, the following day he broke the binding and removed it from the book.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh was speaking about Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn Sāhib when he said: “When he was on his deathbed and was afflicted by paralysis, he was completely overcome with fear of Allāh ﷻ and would cry continuously. If anyone went to visit him, he would say: ‘Brother, I spent my entire life in committing *harām*. It was only through my knowledge that I could influence people. In such a case, how will I get salvation?’ He would say these words and cry spontaneously. If any person recited any verse of glad tiding to him to console and calm him, he would say: ‘Yes, I am also aware of all this, but there are many opposing verses which issue severe warnings.’”

It is not our purpose to write a biography on Hadrat’s teachers. This is a *Sawānih Rashīdiyyah* (biography of Hadrat Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī rahimahullāh). However, these facts and incidents are mentioned in order to demonstrate the impact which Hadrat’s student days had on his life. We can gauge from the above that his natural intelligence and internal excellence had attracted all these teachers towards him. Allāh ﷻ had chosen his teachers and had handed him to these pure souls – matchless in their knowledge,

expertise, merits and excellence. Each one of them was the most select in his time and in his field. Each one was unparalleled in his abstinence [from involvement and love for this world] and in his piety.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh spent about four years in the capital, Delhi, where he studied the Sharī'ah, completed the course of the *Dars Nizāmī* and acquired the honour of being in the service of the *mashā'ikh* of his time. Upon completion of his courses, he attained matchless proficiency in every field of the rational sciences and in every branch of the traditional sciences he became an unequalled, erudite 'ālim.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh possessed a pure heart and was on an Allāh-bestowed quest for the truth. Consequently, his heart naturally yearned to follow the *tarīqah*. He was more inclined towards Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib Naqshbandī Mujaddidī rahimahullāh. However, Allāh ﷻ had already decreed that he should obtain his full share of nearness to Allāh ﷻ from a different source. Natural obstacles were placed as barriers in his path and this prevented him from succeeding in his quest.

Apart from the *Sihāh Sittah*, he also studied the rational sciences – logic, philosophy, literature, astronomy and mathematics, as well as the traditional sciences – *tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), *uṣūl* (principles), jurisprudence, *ma'ānī* (rhetoric) and other subjects under Maulānā ash-Shaykh Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He studied almost every letter of the *Sihāh Sittah* under Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib rahimahullāh. He studied other books, either entirely or partially, under other 'ulamā' as well. Maulānā Muftī Ṣadr ad-Dīn Sāhib and Qādī Aḥmad ad-Dīn Sāhib Punjābī were among these other 'ulamā'.

Hadrat's student days came to an end when he was about twenty-one years old. Upon completion of his studies he returned to his

beloved hometown.

The total length of his stay in Delhi for the sake of acquiring knowledge hardly reached four years. Even his opponents had to concede that he had managed to amass a remarkable amount of knowledge and acquire incredible academic expertise in an unbelievably short space of time. In view of these facts, we stand astonished at how he managed to drink the entire ocean in such a short period.

There is no doubt about the fact that he had outstanding intelligence and that he possessed the ability to grasp difficult concepts very quickly. In addition to this, he was an eager and hardworking student. Out of the twenty-four hours in a day, he spent no more than eight hours in activities such as sleeping, eating, fulfilling his natural, physical needs and fulfilling his Shar'ī duties [*salāh* and other acts of worship]. Apart from this, he spent the entire time studying. He constantly had a book in front of him while his mind was delving into the depths of the subject matter. He used to become so deeply engrossed in studying that he would not even realize if someone were to take away the food which was placed next to him. On numerous occasions he fell asleep while reading a book, only to realise the following morning that he never had his supper.

When walking to, or returning from *madrasah*, he would never look about. He would proceed hastily and return hastily. On one occasion he related the following to us: "There was a *majdhūb* who used to sit next to the road on the way to *madrasah*. We used to pass by him on our way to and from the *madrasah*. We always used to offer *salām* to him from a distance, but we never approached him. The poor person used to look at us with much love and affection and always called us, but we never had the time to become preoccupied with him. We also feared that, if we were to go to him, we might also become a *majdhūb* like him and if that were to

happen, we would not be able to study. Once, he offered us two guavas. We accepted it very hesitantly, but did not eat it. He asked us several times to eat the guavas, but we concealed them in our hands and departed hastily from his company. When we reached home, we placed the guavas on a shelf. A person ate one of those guavas and became a *majdhūb*. The other guava was left on the shelf until it became dry and was thrown away. We stopped using that road and, although it used to take us longer, we used to take another path instead."

During his student days in Delhi, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* did not place any burden on anyone for his boarding and lodging. His maternal uncle used to send him three rupees every month. This money was used to purchase dry bread or curry – whatever was easily available. The same money was used for his clothes, laundry, repairs, letters and any other need which may have presented itself.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* met many alchemists in Delhi. After observing his mannerisms, they offered to teach him alchemy. He wanted to learn this art, but his abstinent and content disposition did not permit him to study it. Hadrat used to say: "I met many alchemists in Delhi. One of them even made something and showed it to me. Another one gave me its formula. It was lying in my *Tirmidhī Sharīf*, but I never paid any attention to all of that. Neither during my student days, nor later on in my life, did the thought ever occur to me that I should at least try to see whether I was able to formulate something or not."

When Hadrat *rahimahullāh* returned to Gangoh, the formula coincidentally slipped out of his book. Some person – whom Hadrat named – was sitting near him at the time. He asked Hadrat for a copy of the formula. Hadrat had no need to act miserly towards him. He transcribed it and gave it to him. He then tore up the original then and there.

If memory serves me correct, Hadrat also related that the person did eventually achieve success with that formula.

During his student days, Hadrat would attend Friday lectures. However, if the lecture contained anything against the Sharī'ah, or if the content had a negative effect on him, he would get up immediately and leave. He would show his distaste for the talk and would be very wary of the speaker and remain aloof from him thereafter.

Hadrat rahimahullāh once related: "During my student days, Maulwī Fadl ar-Rasūl came to Delhi to give a lecture. We also attended his lecture. During the course of his lecture, he said: 'Some people say that it is harām to slaughter an animal in the name of a pious personality. Now tell me, if it is slaughtered in this way, has it caused any change in the species of the animal, which in turn caused a change in its essence and therefore rendered it harām? And listen – if something becomes harām due to the fact that the name of someone other than Allāh ﷻ had been taken, then is it not true that, if anyone [or anything] apart from Allāh ﷻ is worshipped, it ought to be even more harām? Thus the water of the Ganges River ought to be harām.'" Then Hadrat Maulānā said to us: "We were disgusted by his speech and by the strange proofs he offered. We got up from there and left. Thereafter we never attended any of his talks again. Yes, there was a Qādī Sāhib who was our class mate. He was overawed by the man [the above-mentioned lecturer]. The poor person was very naïve and foolish. Once, Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib was explaining in his class: 'People remove their pubic hair in the bathroom and leave it there [where others can see it]. This is an evil habit. The hair which is attached to a place [the pubic region] which is harām to look at, will also be harām to look at when it has been separated from the body.' When Shāh Sāhib said this, Qādī Sāhib [the class mate] remarked: 'Except for the hair of the pious elders'. Everyone, including Shāh Sāhib, burst out laughing when he said this."

During his student days, Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* was as eager to teach the books as he was to study them, but he would only teach once his own work had been completed and therefore teaching would not cause him any inconvenience.

The first group of students whom Hadrat taught in Delhi included Mullā Mahmūd Hasan Deobandī. Thereafter, the honour of being his student went to his maternal cousin, Maulwī Abū an-Nasr. He was followed by another maternal cousin by the name of Maulwī Abū al-Qāsim Sāhib, who was the biological, maternal uncle of Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib [the son of Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh*]. Maulwī Abū al-Qāsim Sāhib was later appointed as police inspector of Ludhiana. The first student whom Hadrat *rahimahullāh* taught in Gangoh was Sayyid Mu'min 'Alī Sāhib.

MARRIAGE

The reader has already learnt that Hadrat *rahimahullāh* had four maternal uncles and that he had married Khadijah Khātūn who was the daughter of his eldest uncle, Maulānā Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib. Maulwī Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib had pledged *bay'ah* to Shāh Sayfullāh Sāhib Nārnaulī *rahimahullāh*. He was of the Qādirīyyah family and was also a *mujāz* of his (i.e. he received permission from him to accept *bay'ah* from others). He was a strict adherent to the Sharī'ah and an ardent lover of the Sunnah. He strictly emulated Rasūlullāh ﷺ in his acts of worship and rigorously practiced upon his habits as well – to the extent of even emulating Rasūlullāh's ﷺ manner and pace of walking. It was well-known that, whenever Maulwī Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib learnt of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ attachment to a particular type of food, he would eat it without hesitation and would make a habit of eating it. Even if the food was harmful to him, he would continue eating it.

Maulwī Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib was an army employee in Jhejar, and was totally devoted to his employer. He did not join the

dissidents during the days of the rebellion. His battalion was split into two companies in order to fight the enemy. One company would go onto the battlefield the one day, and the other would go the following day. He had been selected to fight in one of these companies. However, his desire for martyrdom and dying for the sake of the ruler [and a just cause], had completely overpowered him. Thus, he joined both companies and fought on the battlefield every day. His heart was anxious to die and it was restless in its desire to meet its Creator. He would spend the entire day on his horse, wielding his sword and killing the rebels and in the evening he would return to his tent, dejected at not having realized his desire for martyrdom. At times he would cry and think to himself that his worthless life was not worthy of acceptance in the Court of the Beloved.

Eventually the war was nearing its end and, on the final day of battle, Maulwī Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib donned his army uniform, took up his weapons and said in a sorrowful voice: "O, on the one hand there are those fortunate servants of Allāh ﷺ who have sacrificed themselves for their Master and acquired the eternal life of the Hereafter, while on the other hand, there is a remorseful person like me who did not sustain a single injury to his body." When he proceeded towards the battlefield, he called his loyal servant, who was known as Bundū (he was a resident of Gangoh and an old servant and companion of the Maulānā), and said to him: "Bundū, I have no hope of realizing this honour, but I could well be killed in today's fighting. If I say anything or utter any statement before I die, you must bathe me and then bury me. But if I am killed on the spot, you must bury me in the blood-stained clothes in which I am killed."

After making this final request, the Maulānā proceeded like a groom into the terrifying scene of the battlefield and began fighting fiercely. Instead of anxiety and nervousness on his face, there was peace and tranquillity on it. Instead of fear and restlessness, he was

smiling and cheerful. He would advance like lightning, turn about and move around and, in so doing, he killed two rebels one after the other. He advanced to a third person and injured him in his face with a large dagger. A shot was fired – a bullet struck him – the Maulānā shouted – and he commenced his journey to the Hereafter.

Bundū relates: "When I hastened towards him and carried him off the battlefield, blood was pouring out like fountains from his body and it was flowing out with full force from his wounds. But I cannot say whether it was blood or musk, because, in my entire life, I have never inhaled such a fragrance as that which I inhaled from his blood on that day." The martyred Maulānā's grave is in Delhi at the Pesh Qil'ah (Fort), which is to the north of the old Sunahrī Musjid.

Although he still enjoyed his mother's affectionate supervision, Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib was raised by his grandfather who had taken the place of his deceased father. He was twenty-one years old when his maternal uncles suggested that he should get married. His marriage to his cousin had been agreed upon when he was younger and his future wife was thus already confirmed. Hence, when he returned from Delhi, the date for the marriage was set.

On the wedding day, Hadrat Maulānā was made to wear his wedding-clothes and was brought into the house. It so happened that there was a blind, singing woman in the house by the name of Chandiyā. As per traditional custom, this woman started singing a song in her crude voice and uttered the following words:

*"O gardener's wife, make a garland of flowers (for the groom) ..."*¹⁶

¹⁶ Imām Rabbānī was angered by this song because it was the custom of the Hindus to sing it at their weddings and it is their custom to wear garlands of flowers.

How could Hadrat ever allow such absurdities to be uttered in his presence? He responded spontaneously with a slap. Her mouth was shut the moment the slap landed and she instantly remained dead silent. All the people in the house – big and small – forgot all about the groom and surrounded Chandiyā. They started throwing money at her and coins upon coins were poured onto her. They started flattering and sweet-talking her in an effort to prevent her from cursing the groom. They told her: "Whatever happened has happened. There is no need to utter any curses against the groom."

When Hadrat entered the assembly of the males, the *nikāh* was performed. The person who was performing the marriage, mentioned five thousand coins [as *mahr* – dowry]. Although Hadrat was sitting in the assembly as a groom [and one would expect him to be shy and reserved in such a situation], he flatly refused and said: "I cannot bear such a burden."

Hadrat's father-in-law, Maulānā Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib, was not present at the time of the marriage. The other relatives started discussing the issue. After the insistence of the elders, Hadrat had no option but to accept. Five thousand coins were stipulated as the *mahr* – payable when able – and the marriage was thus concluded. Immediately after the marriage, Hadrat's wife voluntarily and happily absolved him of the entire *mahr*. Only then did his pure heart experience total comfort. Hadrat's wife¹⁷ – the mother of

¹⁷ This pure and chaste woman was extremely pious and righteous. Her piety is beyond description. Apart from being an accepted servant of Allāh ﷻ, she was a very content woman and was not bothered in the least about worldly wealth. She never expressed any desire for jewellery nor did she have any interest in good clothes. This fortunate woman was intensely obedient to her unique husband. This can be gauged from the constant praises which Hadrat Maulānā used to shower on her. He used to say: "As long as Mas'ūd Aḥmad's mother was alive, I never experienced any undue anxiety or grief." She was very hospitable, conscious of etiquette in everything, and very adept at domestic arrangements. No matter what time of the day or night a

Hakīm Sāhib – was fifteen years old at the time of their marriage.

After getting married, Hadrat Maulānā experienced a strong desire to memorize the Qur'ān. This desire increased to such an extent that he commenced the memorization without any teacher. He commenced the memorization of the Qur'ān at a time when worldly-minded people would normally say that the time has arrived to give up all studies.

During those days there was a small cottage on the eastern side of Hadrat's family home – where the kitchen and stairs are at present (on the western side). There was a small hut in front of the cottage where Hadrat used to spend his entire day, engaging himself in the recitation of the Qur'ān. When it was the time for ṣalāh, he would cover the Qur'ān with a cloth, leave the hut and proceed to the Musjid to perform ṣalāh with congregation. The moment he completed his ṣalāh, he would return to the hut and resume his memorization of the Qur'ān. He eventually attained this eternal bounty [of memorizing the entire Qur'ān] and was appointed as the imām for the tarāwīḥ ṣalāh during the blessed month of Ramādān.

An eternal yearning for Allāh ﷻ was striking at his heart. Thus, he started searching for a *Shaykh-e-kāmīl* (a proficient Shaykh) at whose hands he could pledge *bay'ah*. The Pure Allāh, Who guides hearts towards illumination, provided this guidance. Through this Unseen Help and Divine Assistance, he turned towards Thānabhawan in the district of Muzaffarnagar and filled himself with that fruitful bounty – a bounty, in quest of which the kings of

guest would arrive, she would prepare a meal and lay out the table mat. She would occasionally say to Hadrat: "You will constantly remember me after I depart from this world." And it happened such. Why should it not happen such, when Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān: "The righteous females for the righteous males, and the righteous males for the righteous females."

this world would readily give up their thrones, crowns, countries and wealth.

SULŪK AND TARĪQAH

*O you who want to sacrifice your lives!
Go headlong into the markets and bazaars of love [for Allāh ﷻ],
for this unworthy world is soon to pass away.
Learn the method of creating a bond with Allāh ﷻ
by selling your hearts
and buying the goods of madness [in Allāh's love].*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* had developed a very strong bond with Qāsim al-'Ulūm Zubdatul Afādil Maulānā al-Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* during their four years of studying together. They were in the same class throughout this period and had remained in each other's constant company. Their relationship was like that of the sun and moon on the horizon of knowledge – like the body and the soul – like a rose and its fragrance [in other words, they were inseparable] and they had become like a person possessing one life but two bodies.

Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*] enjoyed an ancestral link with Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Qudwatul 'Ārifīn Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A'lā Hadrat's maternal family was from Nānautā and from the family of Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's sister was also married in Nānautā. Hadrat would therefore go to Nānautā quite often and Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib and Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib would always go to meet Hājī Sāhib during these visits. Since their childhood days, Hājī Sāhib used to treat both these gardens of knowledge and virtue with much affection, intense love and devotion. They both learnt the art of bookbinding from him and later in their lives they

used to bind their own handwritten books.

Due to this unique bond and inner affinity, Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm would, without fail, pay a visit to A'lā Hadrat whenever he departed for Delhi and whenever he returned from Delhi. Whenever A'lā Hadrat went to Delhi, he would stay over at the house of Hadrat Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib. On such occasions, his student, Rashīd [Ahmad], would also get the opportunity to meet him.

Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm was in the habit of speaking to his fellow class mates about the excellent qualities which A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* possessed. He would create an inclination towards A'lā Hadrat in their hearts simply by speaking about his unique gifts and miraculous ways. He would speak most often to Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Since they were always together – both in and outside of class – he would speak very highly of A'lā Hadrat. In fact, he made a serious effort to convince Hadrat Maulānā to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands A'lā Hadrat.

Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh* was born with the express purpose of becoming the Qutb and Shaykh of his time. Consequently, his quest for Allāh and rectification of the soul – that is, *tasawwuf* and *sulūk* – and his yearning to acquire this, was deeply embedded in his heart. He wanted to hold the hand of a righteous and level-headed guide. However, his innate fortitude and resoluteness did not permit this yearning to overpower him. It did not permit him to pledge *bay'ah* at someone's hand without first acquiring complete and total confidence in such a person. And so, whenever he heard about the excellent qualities, merits, achievements and virtues of A'lā Hadrat, he would remain silent and examine his heart to see towards whom it inclined.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī described the first time he met A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* thus: "When Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim

Sāhib and I were studying under our *Ustād rahimahullāh*, we made the intention to start studying the book *Sullam*. However, Maulānā [our teacher] did not have the time to teach us and would reply in the negative whenever we asked him to do so. Eventually I said to him: 'Hadrat, please teach it to us just twice a week – on Mondays and Thursdays (or Fridays).' He finally agreed to this and we started these lessons twice a week. We really appreciated and valued these lessons. We were busy with a lesson one day, when a person with a green *lungī* (lower sheet wrapped like a sarong) over his shoulders entered. Hadrat Maulwī Sāhib [our teacher], and everybody else who were present, immediately stood up and Hadrat Maulwī Sāhib said: 'Look Bhāi, Hājī Sāhib has come, Hājī Sāhib has come.' Hadrat Maulānā [our teacher] then addressed me saying: 'Bhāi Rashīd, we will continue the lesson at some other time.' I was very much grieved by the cancellation of the lesson and I said to Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib: 'Bhāi, this Hājī has arrived and because of him our lesson has been cancelled.'"

"Then Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib said: 'Yes, yes. Do not speak in this way. This is a *buzurg* (pious personality).' He started enumerating some of his qualities. We did not know at the time that this very Hājī would be the one to discipline us! So, this was my first meeting with him. Subsequently, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib would regularly enquire about the two of us. He used to say: 'Out of all the students, these two (Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*) seemed to be intelligent.' He would not say anything else."

Although Hadrat Maulānā had met A'lā Hadrat prior to this occasion, we need to bear in mind that he [Hadrat Imām Rabbānī] had studied the *Sihāh* (six most authentic collections of Hadīth) under Shaykh al-Hind Hadrat Hājī Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib rahimahullāh and that he had also completed the sciences of the Sharī'ah under his tutelage. He therefore had more opportunities to present himself before Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib and to attend his

assemblies. Consequently, his heart naturally felt inclined towards pledging *bay'ah* at his hands. He felt content to hold on to the same affectionate teacher to guide him in the *tarīqah*. He had no doubt whatsoever that his teacher possessed the proficiency to combine the Sharī'ah with the *tarīqah*. However, Divine Decree had Willed something else for him and thus this intention of his never reached such a level of determination that it prompted him to request the *bay'ah*, to make any effort towards it, or to be successful in this regard.

During his student days, he had the opportunity to go to Thānabhawān with Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm and a few friends. The entire group stayed over in the Musjid. Accidentaly, Hadrat's shoes got mixed up. Some person wore his shoes and left behind his own sandals. It was the time of *'ishā* and he and his friends were searching for his shoes when A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib entered and said: "Show me the shoes which got mixed up [and left behind]." Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī personally carried the shoes and took them to A'lā Hadrat. He placed them near a lamp and examined them. Then he said: "They belong to Habīb Hasan." Habīb Hasan was one of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib's class mates, but he was a stranger to A'lā Hadrat because A'lā Hadrat had never been introduced to him. This was the first of A'lā Hadrat *karāmat* which Maulānā [Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib] had the honour of witnessing and which attracted his heart towards him. This marked the laying of the foundation of the wonderful palace which was to be constructed during the course of the next sixty years. The life-long 'buying and selling' commenced on that night.

Upon seeing this and many other miracles and unusual feats, Hadrat Maulānā's confidence, love and devotion to A'lā Hadrat increased. However, his enquiring heart and critical gaze did not permit him to come to any decision until after he qualified and completed his studies of the Sharī'ah and Islamic sciences. He still did not know where he should go and whose service he should opt for. This

confusion continued until he returned to Gangoh. It was there that Allāh ﷻ provided him with the means to expect and await victory and to fulfil his objective.

On one occasion, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh* personally related this incident: "When I returned from Delhi after the completion of my studies, I was sitting in the Musjid, writing something. An elderly person entered. He came and stood near me. I continued writing and looked up. My eyes fell upon an illuminated face. I put my pen aside and asked: 'Hadrat, who are you?' He replied: 'I am Imdādullāh.' (Hadrat had already heard about his excellent characteristics and had met him once in Delhi. He had met him again on a second occasion that night in Thānabhawan, but he did not recognize him immediately). I stood up immediately and shook hands with him. I met him with respect and reverence, but he responded with far better character, kindness, humility and love." This was probably Imām Rabbānī's third meeting with A'lā Hadrat.¹⁸

¹⁸ After meeting him in the Musjid, Hadrat went to where A'lā Hadrat was staying, i.e. to the house of Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib, and met him there. It was either during this meeting or during another trip to Gangoh – which was Hadrat's fourth meeting with A'lā Hadrat – that A'lā Hadrat said to him: "Miyā Rashīd Aḥmad! Do you have any desire to learn Allāh's Name and to become a *murīd*, or don't you?" Hadrat Maulānā replied: "Hadrat, my heart desires this very much." A'lā Hadrat asked: "Where and towards whom is your heart inclined?" He replied: "Hadrat, whatever I pondered and reflected over up until now has brought me to the conclusion that I will either become the servant of Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib, or your servant." A'lā Hadrat smiled and deferred the matter by saying: "Yes Sāhib, Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib is an '*ālim* and also a Shaykh. He is a famous *muhaddith* (*Hadīth* scholar). The '*ulamā*' are generally inclined to '*ulamā*'. Why are you including me? I can neither read nor write." Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Outwardly, my inclination towards A'lā Hadrat may have decreased, but he drew my heart towards him." After this conversation, Hadrat's inclination towards the *Āstānah* *Imdādīyyah* (the threshold of Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib) became firm and

During those days, A'lā Hadrat used to stay over at the residence of Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib whenever he would visit Gangoh, or he would stop over there whenever he was on his way to Nānautāh. Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the father-in-law of Imām Rabbānī's daughter – the mother of Hāfiz Muḥammad Ya'qūb. Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib was a very pious, righteous and virtuous man. He was renowned for the fact that he had never accepted any bribery throughout his period of employment. He had always lived a life of piety and simple *halāl* earnings. He had great love for Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and would always meet him with respect. Although he was older than Hadrat, he treated him with reverence.

When Hadrat Maulānā completed his studies, he had an intense yearning to teach. The fact that he was not doing anything made him feel restless. Although he used to keep himself occupied in the study of books and in writing, it was his heart's desire to teach. Allāh ﷻ sent a student to him and thus opened the door to teaching. Maulwī Sayyid Mu'min 'Alī Sāhib was an employee in the Nakur revenue office. He always had the desire to study Islamic sciences and Arabic but never had the time to fulfil this wish. When it became known that Hadrat had returned to Gangoh after completing his studies in Delhi, this old, dormant desire to study was rekindled. He resigned from his post and presented himself before Hadrat in Gangoh. This was a Divine way of fulfilling the wishes of both, and both of them considered it to be a Divine gift. For that reason Hadrat did not hesitate in the least to commence the lessons and started to teach Maulwī Mu'min 'Alī Sāhib the *Sharḥ Jāmī*.

During those days, someone had sent Hadrat an article which had been written by Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib. In the article,

it became manifest within a few days. (Sufi Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib Sahūranpūrī)

Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib stressed the point that a place for one grave had been left empty near the Raudah (blessed grave) of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and that it had been reserved for the burial of Hadrat 'Īsā عليه السلام. The Maulānā further stated that this was a firmly established matter (*amr-e-qat'i*) and that anyone who rejected it was like this and like that.

Instead of confirming or concurring with this article, Hadrat Maulānā wrote the following: "The entire evidence has been based on Ahādīth which are *akhbār ahād* (narrations by a single narrator) and is thus a matter based on speculation (*'ilm-e-zannī*). It is difficult to prove its *qat'iyyat* (firmly established nature)."

When Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* read this, he went into a rage and said: "A small child in a *maktab* dares to refute me!" In that very rage of his, he wrote another booklet to further support his view and sent it to Hadrat Maulānā. Maulānā studied it carefully, but it did not contain any other information, apart from additional details on the chains of transmission of the previously-quoted Ahādīth. Because Maulānā had already written in his previous response to the article that these Ahādīth were *akhbār ahād* and that they affirm speculation (*'ilm zannī*), he simply wrote the following on the reverse side of the letter: "I neither rejected the Ahādīth, nor did I say that this subject cannot be established. What I did state – and I state it again – is that the Ahādīth which have been used throughout this article are *akhbār ahād* and that they cannot be used to establish the *qat'iyyat* (absoluteness) of the subject in question. The present booklet does not answer this objection of mine. As for the Ahādīth which have been quoted ... I do not refute them." Hadrat then quoted the following poem in his letter:

*It is the rider who falls from his mount on the battlefield.
The small child who is crawling cannot fall!*

Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib was a pious and righteous personality of his time. He was a *pīr bhāi* (co-khalīfah) of A'la Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh. He was a *khalīfah* of Miyājī Sāhib rahimahullāh [the Shaykh of Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh]. However, he was overcome by his own knowledge and knowledge does not necessarily cause a person to possess understanding (*tafaqquh*). It also does not mean that such a person cannot err. Thus, he slipped even further on this issue.

On the other hand, Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh was intelligent, insightful and recently-qualified. In addition to having the knowledge, he was eloquent and bold in his speech and writing and had the freshness of youth on his side. Above all, he was very courageous and confident in debating on any issue which entailed the truth. Because of these reasons, he could not restrain himself from writing and clearly wrote whatever he wanted to.

In any event, Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib rahimahullāh could not reply to the original issue because he knew he was wrong. However, the poem which Maulānā had quoted at the end of his letter really irked him. He was angered by it and therefore said whatever came to his mind. He also wrote to some people with the following complaint: "This child who was born in front of me is calling me a child!"

When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī rahimahullāh heard about this, he wrote another letter, saying: "I did not refer to you as a child. I referred to myself as a child. You are actually being praised in this poem. I referred to you as the rider who slipped from his horse. The accusation of disrespect does not apply to me. However, I do acknowledge that I do not agree with you on the original subject matter. I am prepared to accept whatever you have to say in this

regard." This letter did not remove the anger which was seated in Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's initial *jaush* (over-enthusiasm) as an 'ālim, and the academic drive of a *mauhvī* which could either be referred to as a *ḥamīyyat* (defence and zeal) for the *Dīn*, or a prelude to rectification of the soul (*islāh-e-nafs*), now became the impetus behind his decision to personally go to Thānabhawan in order to obtain a verbal verdict on the issue.

Coincidentally he had to attend a wedding in Rāmpūr. He decided to turn this journey into an occasion for engaging in a discussion, and thus decided to take the article with him. Upon completing whatever he had to do in Rāmpūr, he proceeded towards Thānabhawan. He did not first return home, neither did he inform anyone at home about his plans. He thought that the trip would only take him a few hours, therefore, he only took the clothes which he was wearing as provisions for his journey. He did not even bother to take another set of clothes.

An obedient, but weak servant of Allāh ﷻ must endeavour as much as possible to learn about the *Dīn* and to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* did not neglect this duty in any way. He pondered and reflected over the issue, used his mental capabilities, and remained engrossed in pondering and reflection for many hours. He tested, weighed and gauged his temperament, engaged in the Sunnah *istikhārah* several times and, after doing all this, he realized that Thānabhawan was the place for the accomplishment of his desires.

Thus, when he undertook this journey for the purpose of debating, he thought to himself that he would also get the opportunity to meet with A'lā Hadrat and, if he gets the chance, he would express his yearning to become his servant. "If it is accepted, it would be an honour and privilege."

A'lā Hadrat was a Fārūqī by lineage [a descendant of Hadrat 'Umar al-Fārūq ؓ] and belonged to the Hanafī madh-hab. He was fully aware of reality and possessed the ability to acquire knowledge through the use of reasoning, intuition and perception. He was an upholder of the Book of Allāh ؓ and a leader among leaders. He was the pride of the great *mashā'ikh* and the nucleus of both the '*ulamā*' and the masses. He was a source of Holy Blessings, a manifestation of accepted blessings, a spring of Divine Wisdom, a storehouse of facts, an accumulation of intricate matters, the light amongst his contemporaries, the chief among the people of his time, the king of the '*ārifīn* (those who truly recognized Allāh ؓ), the king of those who led an abstemious life, the *gauth* (refuge) of the *kāmilīn* (those who reached a stage of perfection in Sufism), and the helper of the *lālibīn* (those who were seeking Allāh ؓ). He had pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of senior *mashā'ikh* of all four *salāsīl* (plural of *silsilah* – referring to the four schools of Sufism). He was a flower in the garden of Allāh's love. Although he was neither an erudite scholar in the external knowledge of the Sharī'ah, nor a popular *maulwī* of his time, he was completely engulfed in the perfumes of knowledge of the internal self, and fully embellished with the jewels of cognition and conviction ('*irfān wa īqān*). He was a fully-fledged Shaykh of his era.

He had made the village of Thānabhawan, district Muzaffarnagar, the place for the descent of illumination and blessings and the downpour of bestowals and manifestations. He was physically weak, thin and light-bodied. His constant striving and spiritual practices, such as curbing his eating and sleeping, and – the greatest thing of all – his love for the Eternal Beauty of Allāh ؓ which was sufficient to melt the bones, had eventually caused him to become so weak that he could not even change positions when he was lying down. His heart was constantly intoxicated in its yearning to meet Allāh ؓ.

During the days of the Indian Mutiny, with all its accusations of rebellion, he had emigrated to Makkah Mu'azzamah. He enlightened this world with his presence for a period of eighty-four years, three months and twenty days, and departed from this world on the 12th or 13th of Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1317 A.H. Finally he met with his True Beloved at the time of the *fajr adhān*. He was buried in Jannatul Mu'allā (the graveyard of Makkah), next to the grave of Maulwī Rahmatullāh. May Allāh ﷻ purify his grave and make Paradise his abode.

A'lā Hadrat was an affluent man and had received a sizeable share of property as inheritance which seemed to be sufficient for his needs. However, his sound heart was naturally enamoured with abstinence and reliance (*zuhd wa tawakkul*) upon Allāh ﷻ. He therefore transferred all his properties – residential and agricultural – onto his brother's name and made a room in the Musjid his place of residence.

A'lā Hadrat was most desirous of living a life of anonymity. Consequently, he would always conceal himself. He made isolation and detachment a means of concealment – thereby remaining unknown. However, as the Persian saying goes: "*Musk exhibits its fragrance of its own accord and does not need to be displayed by a perfumer.*" How could his self-concealment thus keep him concealed?

Ever since this servant of Allāh ﷻ considered the act of rubbing his forehead onto the ground to be an honour, and ever since *Dīn* entered him from the time of his birth, the poor, the needy, the masses who were seeking *Dīn* and the pious servants alike, flocked to him in droves. He was compelled – as per orders – to accept *bay'ah* from all these seekers and to teach them the methods of engaging in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. The crowds of seekers increased by the day and he would gladly host them all through the extensive *tawakkul* which Allāh ﷻ had bestowed upon him.

Eventually his brother's wife sent a message to him, saying: "You transferred all the property which you had inherited onto your brother's name while you are living a life of hardship and poverty based on *tawakkul*. Now there has been an increase in the number of guests and travellers. Although it does not seem to be a burden to you, my self-respect does not permit me to turn a blind eye to this service. Therefore, as from today, you must send a message to my house informing me of the number of guests which had arrived and the morning and evening meals will be provided by me."

Initially A'lā Hadrat refused this offer with the following message: "No! These are my guests and it is my duty to serve them." However, he eventually yielded to his sister-in-law's persistence – which was based on absolute sincerity – and from that day onward, she prepared the two meals for his guests.

The sister-in-law's sincerity can be gauged from the fact that she used to prepare the meals all by herself and would never be disturbed at having to prepare a meal when guests arrived at odd times. Once A'lā Hadrat had a dream in which he saw his sister-in-law, busy preparing a meal for the guests, when Rasūlullāh ﷺ arrived. He said to her: "Get up! You are not qualified to cook food for the guests of Imdādullāh, [because] his guests are now 'ulamā'. I will cook the food for his guests."

The realization of this blessed dream¹⁹ of his commenced²⁰ with

¹⁹ Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* also interpreted this dream as follows: Rasūlullāh promised that all those who are affiliated to A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib (directly or indirectly) will be protected against a bad death and will always be adorned with the jewel of following the Sharī'ah – *inshā Allāh*. Even the lowest of the low will not have a bad death. (Sufi Maḥmūd Hasan)

²⁰ Although Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Maulānā Nānautwī rahimahullāh] had preceded Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* in his confidence and faith in A'lā Hadrat, he had at that time not pledged

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī Muḥaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He was the first amongst the '*ulamā*' to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Subsequent to this, '*ulamā*' from all over started flocking to him in droves upon droves. A'lā Hadrat enjoyed the unprecedented high platform of becoming the Shaykh and guide of many '*ulamā*'. Only one or two other similar examples can be found in history. It was solely the fruit of this dream which caused over 800 '*ulamā*' to become his *murīds*. "This is the Bounty of Allāh which He bestows on whomever He Wills. And Allāh is the Owner of Mighty Grace."

The moment Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* entered Thānabhawan, he proceeded to the Muḥammad Wālī Musjid. He saw that the *zuhr salāh* had already been performed and found A'lā Hadrat sitting in his *seh darī* - engrossed in reading the Qur'ān. Hadrat presented himself and, when A'lā Hadrat had completed his recitation, Hadrat offered *salām* to him and sat down.

Prior to this, they had probably met one another only once in Delhi, twice in Gangoh and once for a short while at night in Thānabhawan. Although this was their fifth meeting, it was the first time that Hadrat met A'lā Hadrat as his guest in his place of residence. A'lā Hadrat met him with a supremely noble character, afforded him extreme attention and asked him: "Why have you

bay'ah as yet. Whatever encouragement he used to give to Hadrat Maulānā [Gangohī] to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of A'lā Hadrat, and whatever excellent qualities of his he used to describe to him, were all based on his family ties with Nānautā and his visits to this village. The reward for making efforts to get Maulānā Nānautwī to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of A'lā Hadrat goes to Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī. Hadrat [Gangohī] used to relate: "Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib constantly spoke in praise of A'lā Hadrat and thereby caused me to become his *murīd*. Later, it was I who insisted and persuaded Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib to become his *murīd*."

come?" Hadrat Imām Rabbānī told him about his intention of engaging in a debate [with Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib], whereupon A'lā Hadrat replied: "Miyā, you must not intend doing such a thing. He is our *Buzurg*. He is our elder." And so ended the decision concerning the debate and the discussion was resolved there and then. Hadrat said: "If Hadrat is your elder, then he is my elder as well." Thereafter he remained silent.

They started discussing various issues and Hadrat *rahimahullāh*, considering it to be an ideal opportunity, made a suitable request for *bay'ah*. A'lā Hadrat – as per his noble habit – made a display of rejecting this request in order to test the sincerity of Hadrat's request and in order to increase his confidence and yearning. Imām Rabbānī responded with nothing but sincerity and yearning. He was, as it were, a body which was wearing a garment of *qutbīyyat* (from the word *qutb*) and the embodiment of *ṭalab* (quest and search). He showed no sign of arrogance due to his knowledge, nor did he show any pride at being a *maulwī*. These were removed during his initial conversation with A'lā Hadrat.

The more A'lā Hadrat refused, the more he persisted. The more A'lā Hadrat displayed impartiality, the more Hadrat showed his dire need and destitution. Great *mashā'ikh* are always in search of sincere seekers (*ṭālib-e-sādiq*). Consequently, during these few days while Hadrat was put through the tests, Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* tried in various ways to attract Hadrat towards himself. But, as Allāh ﷻ has stated: "*We did not place two hearts in any man*" – Hadrat had already become devoted to one person. There was no turning away and no retracting. He remained absolutely steadfast and clung to one threshold. The Imdādīyyah court had become firmly embedded in his heart. He did not step out of it – nor would he step out of it.

While all this was carrying on, Hadrat Hāfiz Muḥammad Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* started questioning Hadrat about his

reason for coming here. He also questioned him on the condition of his heart. Hadrat replied spontaneously: "The person towards whom my heart is inclined is not accepting me and someone else is trying to draw me towards himself. This is all very strange." Hāfiz Sāhib consoled him and said: "Why are you hasty? Stay here for a few days and observe the conditions here." When Hadrat's determination was exposed from all sides, Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib rahimahullāh acquired the reward of interceding on his behalf before A'lā Hadrat, and thus – a few days after his arrival – he was admitted into the four *salāsīl* (plural of *silsilah* – referring to the four schools of Sufism) at the hands of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib.

Hadrat Maulānā used to relate: "When it was time for me to pledge *bay'ah* at the blessed hands of A'lā Hadrat, I said to him: 'Hadrat, I will not be able to engage in *dhikr* and other forms of striving (*mujāhadah*), neither will I be able to wake up at night.' A'lā Hadrat smiled and said: 'Very well, this is no problem.'" When Hadrat related this, one of his *khādims* (attendants) asked: "Hadrat, what happened after that?" Hadrat replied – and what an astounding reply he gave: "Then I completely obliterated myself [in striving]."

After having his precondition approved, Hadrat pledged *bay'ah* and A'lā Hadrat commenced by instructing him to engage in the *bāra tasbīh* (twelve *tasbīhs*). They placed a bed for him near the bed on which A'lā Hadrat used to sleep and Hadrat slept away. When A'lā Hadrat got up during the latter part of the night – as per his usual habit – Hadrat's eyes also opened. Because the condition had already been agreed upon at the time of *bay'ah*, A'lā Hadrat did not ask him to wake up or to engage in the twelve *tasbīhs* which he had initiated him into. However, the diffusing, influential, fast-acting bestowal of the Shaykh already had an effect on him. On the one hand he had the strong influence of the Shaykh, and on the other hand he had a person who could accept this influence to its absolute limit. If such a total bond and attachment from both sides existed – how could Hadrat possibly remain lying down on his bed? How

could he possibly sleep? He tried to change his posture once or twice and tried to fall asleep, but Allāh ﷻ had already decreed for him to fulfil a service within a few days and thus He provided the means for it on the very first night. He could neither fall asleep nor could he bear this discomfort and restlessness. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* got up, performed *wuḍū'* and went into the Musjid. A'lā Hadrat was busy with his work in one corner. Hadrat went into another corner, performed *nafl salāh* with the intention of *tahajjud*, and commenced making loud *dhikr* of *nafy wa ithbāt* (i.e. *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illallāh*).

When Hadrat relayed this incident he said: "I eventually commenced with loud *dhikr*. I had a good voice and I was physically strong. When I presented myself before him that morning, Hadrat said to me: 'You engaged in *dhikr* like a person who has had a lot of practice in it.' I fell in love with loud *dhikr* from that day on. My heart never desired to give it up nor did I see any Shar'ī reason for its prohibition."

This was the first reward which came to him as a glad tiding [for the future] via his Shaykh's verbal utterance. This reward was given to Hadrat through a little effort in just one night. The minimum fruit of his Shaykh's verbal utterance was that Hadrat was able to continue with the twelve *tasbīhs* and other forms of *dhikr* for the rest of his life. He did this in a reasonably audible voice which could be heard by others in his room. A Hadīth states: "The most beloved deed is the one which is carried out steadfastly." Based upon this, imagine how beloved his loud *dhikr* must have been to Allāh ﷻ because he was enabled to engage in it from the very first day of his *bay'ah* until his final hour in this world!

Readers! Ponder once again over the important reply which Hadrat Qutb al-'Ālam *rahimahullāh* gave to a *khādim's* question: "*Then I completely obliterated myself [in striving].*" This statement ought to be written in gold and engraved upon the heart with the pen of submission. Hadrat truly obliterated himself after that. He destroyed

his *nafs* and completely wiped out the desires of his *nafs*. He became consumed in the Pure Name [of Allāh ﷻ] which he had gone to learn. He acquired the annihilation of the self (*fanā'īyyat*), but that alone did not suffice. Instead, he reached the stage of 'effacement from effacement' (*fanā al-fanā*) – a point where he did not even recognise his own effacement and had become the embodiment of *fanā'īyyat*.

His pure heart – like a fast-flying bird which is attached to its destination – became so utterly confined to the love of Allāh ﷻ at the Imdādīyyah threshold, that he was like a captured bird or an entrapped animal. Despite the demands at home, and the repeated calls from his relatives, he was unable to leave Thānabhawan. Although he had no intention whatsoever of staying over at the time when he presented himself, he was compelled by his heart and the decree of Divine Will to do so. He had to remain there for forty days and, as each day arrived, he found himself thinking: "I will not go today – I will go tomorrow. I will not go tomorrow – I will go the day after tomorrow." Whenever he felt the need to seek permission to leave, A'lā Hadrat would say to him: "Not today. You may go tomorrow." Whenever A'lā Hadrat would ask him when he intended leaving, he would reply: "Not today. I will go tomorrow." Neither did he feel like leaving, nor did A'lā Hadrat feel like sending him away.

A poet says:

*When one experiences the enjoyment of love,
then, even if it is painful,
it ignites a fire on both sides.*

*If this love is not created first
in the hearts of both the lover and the beloved,
and this fire of love is not lit,
then ... when will moths [have the desire]
[to] sacrifice themselves for the fire?*

One week passed since the day Hadrat pledged *bay'ah* and started engaging in loud *dhikr*. On the eighth day, A'lā Hadrat Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] bestowed another gift upon him and gave him the following glad tiding with these words: "Miyā Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad! Allāh ﷻ has now bestowed upon you the bounty which He had bestowed upon me. It is now your duty to make progress in it."

Hadrat Quṭb al-'Ālam used to say: "I was very astonished at the time and asked myself: 'What is Hadrat saying? What did Allāh ﷻ bestow upon A'lā Hadrat which He now bestowed upon me?' I only realized what it was after fifteen years!"

As previously stated, Hadrat had originally embarked upon this trip for the purpose of engaging in a discussion on a juristical issue. He had gone to Thānabhawan in the clothes which he was wearing. He did not carry an extra set of clothes with him, nor did he intend staying over. If that were the case, he could have had another set sewn. He remained there without any intention of doing so and his stay lasted for over forty days. Whenever his clothes became soiled, he would wash it himself. But, by and large, he wore it as is.

Forty days were completed in this blessed companionship and engrossment with *dhikr*. Hadrat Quṭb al-'Ālam *rahimahullāh* was suffering from a fever at the time. Hadrat felt it unmannerly to place a burden upon A'lā Hadrat to tend to him during his illness. At the same time, he was receiving demand upon demand from his family members (to return). As the days went by, his family became more worried. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what thoughts must have crossed their minds, because he had left home for Thānabhawan for just one day and had not taken any provisions for the journey. For what reason could he be staying away for so many weeks without even mentioning when he would be returning home? Thus Hadrat Imām Rabbūnī *rahimahullāh* sought permission to leave and A'lā Hadrat gladly acceded. Hadrat completed his stay of forty two days and

departed from Thānabhawan. Together with a large group of his associates, A'lā Hadrat personally accompanied his young departing guest for some distance in order to fulfil the Sunnah. [This is known as *mushāya'at* in Arabic].

Hadrat Maulānā insisted that A'lā Hadrat should not accompany him, saying: "I am discomforted by your discomfort." However, A'lā Hadrat's heart desired to walk with him for as long as his strength permitted. Eventually both – the attendant and the one being attended to – together with several associates and contemporaries, set out on foot, while the ox-wagon remained empty – sometimes moving ahead of them and at other at times following behind them.

A'lā Hadrat, out of fatherly affection and the simple, informal love of a *murabbī* (spiritual guide), demanded that Maulānā should get onto the ox wagon. Because of the internal heat of love and the weakness of his feverish body, his body required rest. However, Maulānā's extreme respect, reverence, humility and submission demanded that he should consider every step which A'lā Hadrat was taking, because every step was a source of unity [with Allāh ﷻ], and a source of life, and a means of his salvation in this world and in the Hereafter. At the same time, these blessed feet were not walking upon the earth, but upon his burning heart, and it was the cause of honourable pain to him [i.e. a pain which a person would consider to be an honour to bear]. Hence, a remarkable scene unfolded, wherein Imām Rabbānī – out of his extreme respect for his Shaykh – could not get onto the ox wagon and A'lā Hadrat could not fulfil the request of his spiritual child to return to Thānabhawan.

Eventually, A'lā Hadrat himself considered the illness of his spiritual son and realised that, by walking any further, he would only add to his pain and illness. He stopped and asked the entire group to stop with him. He then took Hadrat Maulānā by his hand,

moved to one side and said: "If anyone requests to pledge *bay'ah* at your hands, you must accept his *bay'ah*." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to relate: "I asked: 'Who is going to make such a request to me?' A'lā Hadrat replied: 'Of what concern is it to you? You must merely do what I am telling you.'"

Thus Hadrat Maulānā received the third gift at the end of this first journey. This is the gift – the acquisition of which many pious elders have searched for and for which they have had to fulfil numerous years of service at the feet of great *mashā'ikh*.

Al-hamdulillāh, the reason for which Imām Rabbānī had left Gangoh was by now completely forgotten. The matter which he had given so much thought to, for which he had made *istikhārah* and which was the desire of Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*] had now been fulfilled and he returned home after forty three days. Look at Allāh's ﷻ Will! Hadrat had become a *sāhib-e-nisbat* (a person who enjoys a close connection with Allāh ﷻ) the very moment he pledged *bay'ah*. Immediately thereafter he was appointed as a *khalīfah* and while they were walking, he was given this blessed instruction from A'lā Hadrat: "If anyone requests to pledge *bay'ah* at your hands, you must accept his *bay'ah*."

This journey turned out to be a journey of *bay'ah* and this very journey led to the acquisition of *khilāfat*. This short period had been a period of striving and these few days had become a period of triumph and success. He had come to engage Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib in a discussion. It was merely by the way that he arrived as an 'untutored person' to learn the methods of engaging in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. He returned home as a fully knowledgeable 'ālim of the *tarīqah*, a *mujāz* (person permitted to accept *bay'ah*) and a Shaykh of his era – ready to teach others the methods of engaging in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and ready to convert Gangoh into a place of illumination and a sanctuary for

multitudes.

A poet says:

*If you want to know about the circumstances
surrounding the Dīn of Allāh,
then ask Mūsā ~~and~~ regarding it:
He went to obtain fire,
but he received Prophethood.*

A'lā Hadrat did not simply permit him to accept *bay'ah* – he ordered him to do so. Having done this, he shook hands with him, bade him farewell and returned to his village. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī felt saddened by the impending physical separation from his Shaykh. He bade farewell to his friends, climbed onto the ox wagon, and set off in the direction of Gangoh. The condition, enthusiasm and preoccupation with which he had passed his time there was beyond description. It is beyond anyone to speak about it, to learn about it or to inquire about it.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's maternal cousin and childhood friend and companion, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib used to say: "When Hadrat returned to Gangoh, he lived in my house. He used to get up in the middle of the night and proceed directly to the Musjid. I used to follow him there. When he used to start his loud *dhikr*, it seemed as if the entire Musjid was trembling. Who knows what was going through him at that time?"

Whatever it was that he had acquired at the Imdādīyyah threshold in Thānabhawan – it did not permit him to eat and drink. He became completely occupied and engrossed in his thoughts. Crying became a source of comfort and relaxation to him. Very often, he would spend the entire night crying and the entire day would pass in deep contemplation. His mother made a green quilt for him as protection against the cold when going to the Musjid at night and to provide him comfort when it was mildly cold. He used to dab his

tears with this quilt and consequently, its entire colour and appearance changed.

Hadrat Maulānā used to spend the second half of the night in the Musjid. There he would engage in loud *dhikr* and spend his time in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and in supplication to his Master. The people of his village came to know of this and concluded that he had gone to Thānabhawan to become a *murīd*. Prior to this, no one knew the reason behind his journey to Thānabhawan. People started speaking about it and this aspect of his life, which he had hoped to keep concealed throughout his life, gradually spread of its own accord amongst the people. Women, men, young and old, all came to know about it. Like the fragrance of musk, it spread throughout the village.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had no desire whatsoever that any *talīb* (seeker) should come to him to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands, nor did he consider himself to be in the least qualified for this. When A'lā Hadrat had conferred *khilāfat* and *ijāzat* upon him, he had simply replied: "Who is going to make a request of *bay'ah* to me?" This was a sincere and heart-felt response and a factual reflection to that which was inside his true heart – a heart which was not even influenced by any superficial posturing and pretension. In reality, it was this acknowledgement of his own incompetence which emanated from his heart that proved his complete competence, and it was on account of this that he received *ijāzat* and the Assistance and Blessing of Allāh ﷻ which remained with him henceforth. It never crossed his mind that he would be considered as a Shaykh and that people would express the desire to become his *murīds*. However, the insightful utterance of A'lā Hadrat – which was in reality a translation of the Order of Allāh ﷻ – had already instructed him: "If anyone requests to pledge *bay'ah* at your hands, you must accept his *bay'ah*." Consequently, it did not take long for this prediction to be realized.

A few days after returning to Gangoh, a chaste and pious woman made a request for *bay'ah* and said: "Make me your *murīd*."

This was a unique situation. This pure and pious servant of Allāh ﷻ thought to himself: "Why has the world become so foolish? How can they consider an unqualified and absolutely worthless person like me to be worthy? How can a woman from my very own village request *bay'ah*?" Imām Rabbānī lowered his head out of Allāh-endowed modesty and, due to his innate humility and the annihilation of his self, he could not accept this request and politely declined. But look at Allāh's ﷻ Power! The more he refused, the more she insisted.

Meanwhile, A'lā Hadrat had left [Thānabhawan] to go to Nānautā. On his way, he stopped over in Gangoh at Hadrat's place. This was the first time that Imām Rabbānī had the opportunity of hosting A'lā Hadrat. No matter how much pride he exhibited at this wonderful opportunity, he could never have exhibited enough. No matter how much gratitude he expressed to Allāh ﷻ for His Favour, it could never have been sufficient. Just a few days earlier he had been the guest of A'lā Hadrat in Thānabhawan. Today his master in his worldly and *Dīnī* affairs and the crown of his head was showing his informality by staying over at his place. Hadrat's response was portrayed in this poem:

*"He has come to my house!
This is nothing but a demonstration of Allāh's Power.
At times I look at him ... and at times at my house
[and I think to myself –
it is unbelievable for such a great personality
to have come to my house]."*

The fortunate woman [who had wanted to become Hadrat's *murīd*] could not have found a better opportunity of fulfilling her heart's desire. The inattention of the *pīr* (Shaykh) must be conveyed to the

dādā pīr (the Shaykh's Shaykh) and a complaint against the father has to be laid in front of the grand-father. She sent a message to A'lā Hadrat saying: "Hadrat, I want to become a *murīd*, but Maulānā is refusing me."

Now look at the pure and exquisite question which A'lā Hadrat asked: "Why Sāhib? Why is the applicant's request not being accepted?" Out of shame, Hadrat Maulānā broke into a sweat. He replied: "Hadrat, I am not qualified to do this. If the master of the era is present, how can the slave have the audacity to become the master of someone else?" No matter what reply he gave, A'lā Hadrat repeatedly said: "If someone has confidence in you alone, of what benefit will it be to him [or her] to become my *murīd*?" In the end, A'lā Hadrat got up, took Imām Rabbānī with him to the woman's house and said: "Here, accept her *bay'ah* in my presence."

Allāh! Allāh! What a fortunate woman she was for having her request fulfilled in her very own home. How fortunate she was that two proficient physicians visited the sick person in her very own home in order to treat her spiritual ailments and to teach her how to engage in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. Picture the immeasurable joy of this woman who had been given this limitless gift in such an unexpected manner. Conversely, observe Imām Rabbānī's shame, bashfulness, obedience and submission. He had to accompany A'lā Hadrat, with his head lowered, to the house of the woman whose request he had declined and he had to accept her *bay'ah*. Consider the way in which A'lā Hadrat conferred this honour and excellence onto his beloved, Rashīd. He walked with him through the alleys of Gangoh in order to make him a Shaykh.

This was the first occasion during which Imām Rabbānī had the fortune of obeying the instruction of his Shaykh and he carefully preserved and stored it in his heart for the rest of his life. Consequently, he would always say: "Hadrat Hājī Sāhib

rahimahullāh had strictly emphasized that I should accept *bay'ah* and that is the only reason why I accept it. The fact is that, from the depth of my heart, I do not desire it."

Oh, look at the fortunate and beloved Rashīd who was so obedient to his Shaykh! Oh you, who accuse him of acting against the wishes of his Shaykh, what will your condition be on the Day of Resurrection when both spiritual father and son will be together in the close proximity of Allāh's Mercy? Upon the pages of their books of deeds, this early incident will be written in highlighted letters. This incident during which A'lā Hadrat accompanied him to the house of the woman so that he could accept her *bay'ah*, and during which his Shaykh ensured that he accepts it from her, will be placed before the entire creation. In short, A'lā Hadrat reached the woman's house, instructed Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad rahimahullāh to accept her *bay'ah* in his presence and proceeded to Nānautā.

When Hadrat Maulānā returned to Gangoh after pledging *bay'ah* and receiving permission to accept *bay'ah*, he made the intention to go to Thānabhawan on a regular basis in order to present himself in the Imdādīyyah court. If he remained in Gangoh for eight days, he would go to Thānabhawan for ten days. At times he would stay in Thānabhawan for twelve days and then return to Gangoh for fifteen days. In brief, he considered it essential to present himself in front of A'lā Hadrat either on a monthly, fortnightly, or often even on a weekly basis.

During his student days, his relatives had considered it their duty to assist him financially as much as they could. However, this period had now passed. Several months had now passed since he returned to Gangoh, settled down and got married. His sound temperament and innate self-respect would not permit him to extend his hand to anyone and to live on the charity of others. He relied upon Allāh Alone and this reliance would not allow him to accept any means of

livelihood. He wanted his entire family and all his relatives to leave him as he was. He did not want them to help him or see to him – even if he were to experience poverty or need. How could his family, especially his maternal uncles, place blinkers on their eyes and not see to the needs of their beloved orphaned nephew?

During this time, he received an offer to teach the translation of the Qur'ān for which he was offered a salary of seven rupees per month. He consulted A'lā Hadrat in order to get his approval, but received the following reply from him: "Do not accept this offer. You will receive a better offer." He thus wrote a letter declining the offer. A few days later, the officer in charge of Sahāranpūr, Nawāb Shā'istah Khān, called and asked him to teach his children, offering him ten rupees per month.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was regarded as a very valuable person by those who knew him but he considered himself to be insignificant and worthless. He considered ten rupees to be sufficient for his monthly needs and far more than what he was worthy of. He thus considered this offer to be a favour from Allāh – his Provider and Benefactor – and gladly accepted it. When A'lā Hadrat heard of this, he said: "If you had remained patient, you would have received employment at a better wage."

However, Imām Rabbānī did not really want to work (for an employer). To him this was merely a deception so that his family members could leave him in peace. In addition to this, he was not desirous of this world nor did he hanker after it and he did not want to engross himself in earning a livelihood. Consequently, his hastiness in accepting this offer became the means through which he was able to make *Dīnī* progress. He worked for about six months after which he adopted total *tawakkul* – something which has rarely been found in this world.

By practically and personally accepting a salary for teaching, he

provided peace, satisfaction and consolation to his weak associates [who may have been reluctant to accept payment for such services]. He chose the occupation of teaching and training children and acted upon the order that 'earning a living' should be considered as a form of worship. He expressed his total need and dependence upon the favours of Allāh ﷻ. He considered this meagre ten rupee earning as a gift from Allāh ﷻ and a lawful earning and therefore accepted it with gratitude. He served his parents, provided for his wife, made his entire family happy and disproved the criticism of those who claim that *maulwīs* do not have the ability to earn a living. After passing through all these stages, he felt overcome by the condition and absorbing concern for which he had been created. He handed in his resignation, left his employment and returned to Gangoh.

Upon returning to Gangoh, he devoted himself entirely to gaining the proximity of Allāh ﷻ. He considered striving, spiritual exercises and solitude to be his spiritual nourishment and continued increasing all of this willingly and with yearning. He did this to such an extent that he once personally described: "I then obliterated myself in striving (*mujāhadah*)."

Truth be told – he truly did obliterate himself to such an extent that onlookers were left astounded. At times they were unable to recognize him. There were occasions when his physical condition had reached such a level that onlookers felt convinced that he was suffering from an internally destructive and life-threatening illness.

Any noble-minded person will consider the burden which he bore to be heavier than mountains. The attachment of his heart, the restrictions in his food, speech and sleep, as well as the constant accusations and criticism of the people which he had to endure all seemed to be tragedies. The following are some of the statements which were made regarding him:

(1) "Miyā went to Thānabhawan and returned as a *murīd*." (2) "He has now paralysed his legs and feet and is completely attached to

the Musjid.” (3) “What a great tragedy has befallen his wife and children!” (4) “Since he was not capable of earning a livelihood, what else could he do [but become a Sufi Sāhib]?” (5) “Do not give him any food. When he experiences some suffering, he will think of working for a living.”

In short, there were as many opinions as the number of people in the village. However, he had become totally obliterated in his preoccupation and he abhorred antagonism, thus he remained completely unmoved by all these comments. He was a mountain of fortitude and steadfastness and remained engaged in his work. It was as if he had bid farewell to this world, placed it on a high shelf, and thought to himself ...

*The Rose to which I have given my heart,
and the Flower for which I have sacrificed myself,
should either come to my side
or my life must be freed from its cage!*

Although he remained absolutely silent [in the face of all the criticism], he was saying through his condition ...

*Curses, accusations, abuses, vulgarities, criticism and hatred
will all be tolerated to sacrifice this unworthy soul.
Why should I complain to the Beloved over this blood,
when I am receiving ransom for it every day?*

During the course of pledging *bay'ah* in Thānabhawan, he had purchased some 'goods' by selling his valuable heart. His intense love for these 'goods' had made him like a madman and caused him to become so completely obliterated and engrossed that he even became engrossed in its obliteration. As per the instruction of A'lā Hadrat, he was completely immersed in sacrificing himself for the Divine Bounty which he had received on the eighth day. It was as if every little part of him was saying:

*Arrows, muskets, spears and sharp swords ...
I can bear not just one of them,
but all of them together.*

Hadrat considered the hardships of life and the difficulties of refraining from food and drink to be enjoyable and sweet. He regarded the antagonism and harsh words of the people to be a source of honour. His heart, which had become confined to the One Allāh ﷻ, considered employment – or any other connection with earning a living in this world – to be a shackle around the feet and a chain around the hands. He considered anything related to an occupation and earning a livelihood as a shackle around the neck. Every road in this short-lived world was viewed as a dangerous path in which every step meant making oneself a target to dangerous highway robbers. He already regarded this world as a prison. He was overcome by a certain loathing for the creation and a detestation for going out into the public. Had this continued, it would have resulted in no one remembering what Imām Rabbānī had looked like, and he would not have known anything about anyone.

I personally heard my teacher, Maulānā ‘Abd al-Mu’min Sāhib, saying that someone went to complain to A’lā Hadrat saying: “Although Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib is an *‘ālim*, we do not find any sociable character in him.” A’lā Hadrat replied: “Miyā, consider it a boon that Maulānā is living in an inhabited place. My Rashīd has already reached the level of *malakūtīyyat* (angelic qualities). Had Allāh ﷻ not Willed for him to undertake the task of reforming the people (making their *islāh*), Allāh ﷻ Alone knows in which mountain cave he would have been living. Allāh ﷻ had Willed for him to render academic services and another major task – thus, He carried him down and placed him in an inhabited place (among civilization).”

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had a natural aversion to seeking this world.

His heart was purified from the love of gold and riches. It was completely free from such love. When he was twenty-five years old, an incident took place which clearly demonstrates this natural disposition of his: His father, Maulānā Hidāyat Ahmād Sāhib was employed in Gaurakhpūr. After retaining whatever money he needed for his personal necessities, he would send the remainder to Hadrat's grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib. His father was a righteous man and, whenever he used to send the money, he would respectfully write: "Use the money to purchase a house or shop – whatever you like – but do not mortgage anyone's property under any circumstances." However, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib was not as observant of the Sharī'ah as the grandfather of Qutb al-'Ālam ought to have been. As is the case with worldly-minded people, he was concerned about immediate profits and felt this attitude to be acceptable. Thus, he did not fulfil his son's request and had many plots of land on mortgage.

When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī turned twenty-five and had the power to make his own decisions and exercise his rights over the inheritance, he obtained a list of all the people whose land had been mortgaged and tallied all the income documents and receipts. Those whose amounts equalled the capital wealth were struck off as people who owed nothing. Those who owed a few rupees were absolved of any payment. Those whose amounts were beyond the capital wealth were given the additional amounts back. The hundred to hundred and twenty-five rupees which remained in cash was distributed and most of his wife's jewellery was sold. In this way, all those who were in debt unexpectedly became the owners of their land once again. Through the honesty of Imām Rabbānī, they were absolved of all their debts.

This story may appear to be insignificant and trivial. The readers, or those who may come to hear about it, may consider it to be merely a story of the past. However, if one should observe this in-depth and without any partiality, it would clearly demonstrate his total

emulation of the Sunnah – something which many senior *maulvis*, as well as those who appear to be religious, falter in and fail to fulfil at times of trials and tribulations. This is especially obvious when money, which has already been spent and consumed, has to be returned. In such a case one's household possessions has to be sold and one's new wife has to be told: "Remove the toe-rings and anklets from your feet, the rings and bangles from your hands as well as your earrings, so that we may sell them, pay back those who are owed and obtain the jewellery of the Hereafter in exchange for the jewellery of this world."

Even before the abovementioned incident occurred, he already displayed an example of 'enjoining good'. Occasionally utensils, pots and small dishes used to arrive at his maternal uncle, Miyā 'Alī Hasan Sāhib's house as *pīr zādagī*²¹ donations, and these used to be adorned and displayed in the name of Ilāh Bakhsh. Whenever Imām Rabbānī would hear of the arrival of these items [at his uncle's house], he would proceed with a stick in his hand and break all of them. The women of the house would try to stop him, saying: "Do not break them. If you do not want us to do this, we will give these items to the toilet cleaner or any other sweeper who will be able to use them. We will not use them for ourselves." However, he would not pay any heed to them and would not return home until he had broken all of these items.

This incident has brought to my mind all his relatives who used to be known as *pīr zāde* (plural of *pīr zādah*). These relatives enjoyed many benefits in the name of *pīr zādagī* because they were from the *khānqāh* of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī rahimahullāh. The honour which they enjoyed was due to the assemblies of 'urs,

²¹ From the word *pīr zādah* which means 'family or descendant of a saint'. People used to send certain items to such families as a way of acquiring blessings.

simā' and music which they used to host. They felt threatened and adopted a 'wait and see' attitude. Their feelings of dread were valid, because Hadrat Imām Rabbānī never tolerated such activities. His abhorrence of these activities was displayed within a short space of time when he started delivering talks and giving words of advice and adopted all other possible means in order to get the people to adhere to the Sharī'ah.

Allāh ﷻ had already placed the necessary qualities of determination, steadfastness, courage, bravery, self-respect, according preference to others, generosity, humility, submission, frankness and honesty in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. These qualities were now starting to increase by the day and it became manifest at the appropriate times. After pledging *bay'ah* to A'lā Hadrat, his disposition had changed and the manifestation of all these qualities were now directed at the injunctions of the Sharī'ah which had been perfected at the hands of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the Arabian desert over a period of twenty-three years.

In matters of obedience to the truth, Hadrat never feared the criticism of critics. Whether a person was rich or poor, someone in a position of authority or an ordinary lay person, old or young, big or small – he would never delay or falter in conveying the injunction of the Sharī'ah to the person in question, nor would he postpone advising him at an appropriate time and under suitable circumstances. He never feared any harm or threats from anyone.

Hadrat never felt grieved by hardship and poverty. The manner in which he strove in his spiritual exercises caused onlookers to feel sorry for him. During his old age, when he was over seventy years old, he would fast during the day and after the *maghrib salāh*, instead of performing [the minimum] six *rak'ats* of *awwābīn salāh*, he would perform [the maximum of] twenty *rak'ats* during which he would not recite less than two *pārās/juz* of the Qur'ān. In addition to this, his *rukū'* and *sajdah* (bowing and prostrating) used

to be very long – so long in fact, that people thought he had forgotten to get up from these postures. He would return home after completing his ṣalāh and, after arriving home, he would complete reading several pārās/juz of the Qur'ān while waiting for his meal to be served. A short while later he would proceed to the Musjid for the 'ishā ṣalāh and tarāwīh ṣalāh. This would take at least one hour. After the tarāwīh ṣalāh – at about 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. – he would go to sleep. He would wake up, without fail, between 2:00 and 2:30 a.m. In fact, his khādims occasionally saw him waking up at 1:00 a.m. Upon waking, he would spend two and a half to three hours in tahajjud ṣalāh. At times, if any khādim happened to arrive at 5:00 a.m. to give him his sehrī, he would still find Hadrat in ṣalāh.

After the fajr ṣalāh, he would remain engaged in dhikr, wazā'if, murāqabah (meditation) and other forms of worship until about 8:00 a.m. He would then perform ishrāq ṣalāh, after which he would rest for a few hours. This would be followed by replying to letters and issuing fatāwā. He would take a siesta (qaylūlah) after performing the chāshṭ ṣalāh. His room would remain closed after zuhr ṣalāh because he would be occupied in the recitation of the Qur'ān. This would continue until the 'asr ṣalāh.

His mujāhadah during this particular Ramadān has all been well recorded. He fulfilled all this despite his old age, weakness and constant, severe pain in his hips. This pain was so excruciating that he would have to sit down along the way whenever he had to walk from the toilet to his room – which was only about fifteen steps away. Despite this, he did not even perform his nafl ṣalāh while sitting – let alone the fard ṣalāh. Consider the lengthy periods which he used to spend in the performance of ṣalāh. On numerous occasions his khādims would advise him to sit down while performing the tarāwīh ṣalāh, but his reply would always be, "No! That would demonstrate a lack of courage." Glory to Allāh! It is no easy task to be a deputy of the Rasūl ﷺ who had said:

أفلا أكون عبدا شكورا

“Should I not be a grateful servant?”²²

This deputyship cannot be attained without such courage.

Hadrat used to increase his performance in every act of worship during the month of Ramādān, but he used to pay particular attention to the recitation of the Qur’ān. He would not speak while leaving or returning from his home. He used to recite about half the Qur’ān daily – just during and after his ṣalāh. On the first morning of Ramādān he would address all those who were present and say: “The court is dismissed from today. It would be extremely sorrowful if a person permits Ramādān to go to waste as well.” Despite all this *mujāhadah*, he used to eat very little during the month of Ramādān. His entire month’s food consumption would not even amount to five *ser* (about 4.5kgs) of grain.

If there is any elderly person today who had spent time with Hadrat during his younger days, who had kept an observant eye on all his activities, and who could remember whatever he had seen – ask him to describe Imām Rabbānī’s *mujāhadah* during the days when he was still physically strong, when his body was filled with the potency of youth, when there was a yearning in his heart and his courage was accompanied by physical vigour. It is not only difficult, but almost impossible to gauge the extent to which he must have exerted himself in his worship during his younger days. Out of all his contemporaries, only Maulānā Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib has remained and he is too ill to even remember anything that happened

²² This was the response of Rasūlullāh ﷺ when his feet had become swollen due to standing in ṣalāh for lengthy periods and ‘Ā’ishah radiyallāhu ‘anhā had asked him the reason for his toiling in this manner when Allāh ﷻ had already forgiven him all his past and future sins.

yesterday. His memory has become extremely weak and he has even forgotten parts of the Qur'ān. How could he be expected to remember anything of his childhood days?

For his worship and solitude, Hadrat had selected a particular room that used to belong to Abū Sa'īd *rahimahullāh* and which is known as the Quddūsī Hujrah (Quddūsī room). After he shifted to this room, he remained the *mu'adhdhin* of the Musjid for most of the remainder of his life. The room is still well-known by this name.

In short, he began to use the high and lofty courage, which he had been naturally blessed with from the copious treasures of Allāh ﷻ, in order to gain complete proximity and closeness to Allāh ﷻ. Every moment of his valuable life, which Allāh ﷻ had converted into jewels and exchanged in return for the Hereafter, was spent in earning the profits of the Hereafter.

He would spend the peaceful hours of the night in calling out to his Allāh and the dark hours of the night in prostrating before his Creator. He would present himself in His Court, press his nose to the ground, cry to Him, beseech Him, and become anxious before Him. He would feel restless and unsettled when sitting in the company of people. He preferred the silence of the leaves in the jungle and would feel comfortable in the deep corners of deserted houses. If he was invited to any family function, his body would metaphorically respond as follows:

*To your magnificent functions, do not call a child (like me).
A restless and grieving heart will only spoil your enjoyment!*

Whenever he came across an uninhabited building or the bombarded ruins of a fort, he would spontaneously respond:

“Why should a madman not find enjoyment in such a deserted place? After all, everyone is to meet the same fate. All occupations

of this world will come to an end one day. Seek Allāh ﷻ in solitude – this is the only thing of benefit.”

Hadrat’s natural disposition of seeking solitude and his condition of searching for seclusion caused him to set eyes on a deserted and desolate room which was situated next to the house in which he was living at the time. It was the same room which had been – at some time in history – the private room of his forefather and spiritual and worldly forebear – Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. The turmoil of time had changed this room into a stable for donkeys and horses. Hadrat became restless upon seeing this. When his eyes gazed at this Quddūsī *khānqāh* which was situated next to the grave and behind the Musjid, and he thought of his forefather’s life there, his eyes filled with tears and he started crying.

At times he thought of the absolute independence of Allāh ﷻ Who had reduced many towering and lofty forts into dust – completely forgotten and lost to the world. At other times he would be overcome by the fleeting nature of this world in which gardens and orchards, which once were filled with thousands upon thousands of roses, had been reduced to heaps of manure.

Imām Rabbānī’s soft, easily-affected heart, and his bosom which was filled with the spirit of sacrifice in emulation of the pious servants of Allāh ﷻ, boiled over when he stepped into the ruins of the Quddūsī *khānqāh*. He felt as if he was witnessing the Greatness of Allāh ﷻ. It was the pure place of worship of that Quṭb al-‘Ālam – upon which Allāh’s Mercies were being showered by night and day like continuous rains. He witnessed the ground upon which the Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh used to press his nose and forehead in front of his Allāh – and he looked at its present deserted and derelict condition.

There was a time when the walls and the ceilings of this room would reverberate with the proclamations of *ḥaqq* (the reality of

Allāh ﷻ) and the heart-rending sounds of the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ. Now nothing could be heard but the buzzing of mosquitoes and flies and the sounds of fleas and spiders. The surrounding rooms in which the associates and true seekers (*tālib*) of the Shaykh used to lay their straw mats and spend their nights in the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ were now inhabited by snakes, scorpions and other worms and insects. The spot upon which the Sayyid al-Mashā'ikh's blessed *musallā* (ṣalāh mat) used to be placed – the mere touch of which was considered to be the cause of one's salvation – was today being trampled upon by a donkey and the pure ground was being rendered impure by its urine and dung. The house of this meticulous-natured *ghauth* of the time, whose concern about cleanliness demanded that ṣalāh should not be performed without having used the *miswāk*, now had heaps of dung and droppings scattered everywhere.

Upon seeing this astounding scene, Hadrat would cry, express his sorrow and learn the lesson of the fleeting nature of this world, while at times he would console his heart by recognizing the Absolute Power of the All-Powerful Allāh ﷻ. In short, this admonitory scene became a source of increase in *īmān*, realization, and spiritual progress for him. After three hundred years, this very legacy was about to be given to its true heir. In addition to this, Allāh ﷻ had set aside the cottages and rooms which had formed the worldly estate of the Shaykh to fall into Hadrat's lot. The derelict condition and unliveable state of this place had actually protected it from the clutches of unworthy, worldly, materialistic people and had prevented it from becoming the house or relaxing area of anyone.

The person who would appreciate this 'buried' and dilapidated building had now reached the age of puberty and understanding. The fragrant musk of this place – which had become concealed by the smell of dung and impurities – had found a physician who would convey its wonderful fragrance to the rest of the world. Thus, the legacy of the Shaykh who possessed angelic qualities

now fell into the lot of his righteous and illuminated heir – Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Imām Rabbānī got up and loaded the dung and droppings of the donkeys and horses onto huge pans and threw it outside. All the droppings and rubbish had formed a huge pile of manure, which Ḥadrat then dug out with a hoe. Thereafter he levelled the ground. He took fine soil, mixed it with water, and made it into a type of plaster with which he plastered the walls and floors. Due to the soil which had accumulated on the roof after the rains, grass had grown on the roof. This grass had grown to one hand's length. Ḥadrat cut the grass and then cleared out all the dirt and sand – turning it into a clean and shining roof. New soil was mixed with water, the holes were sealed, and he personally repaired all the timber. The floors were covered with straw mats, *lobān* (frankincense) was burnt in all the corners, perfume was scattered throughout the building and, after three hundred and twenty-five years, this sanctified room [of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*] was once again converted into a private room²³, reserved for the worship of Allāh ﷻ. As the famous saying goes: "If a person is on death row, three hundred hours seem like a very long time (fearing at every moment). But, if a person is looking forward to receiving a great boon, then three hundred years also seems like a very short time."

²³ Before this, Ḥadrat's private room was the small and dark room in the same Quddūsī *khānqāh*. This room was to the south of the Musjid and a person had to pass it when going towards the graveyard. This room is known as Hujrah Shaykh Abū Sa'īd *rahimahullāh*, because it had been inhabited by him for quite some time. Ḥadrat used it for worship for some time and his *maṭabb* (medical consulting room) also started off from here. In those days, the land upon which this room was situated, was quite low. If a bed was placed in it, it would be level with the ground. (Ḥāfiẓ Muhammad Yā'qūb)

MEDICAL CONSULTING ROOM

A poet says:

*The best among the creation
is he who is of benefit to the creation.
This benefit could be to the soul, or to the body.*

*True knowledge is thus confined to just two things:
knowledge of Dīn,
and knowledge of the body.*

Allāh ﷻ bestowed Hadrat with a lofty level of providing general benefit to His creation. Hadrat was bestowed with this ability at the time when his heart was fully occupied in gaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ. Divine Will provided Imām Rabbānī with the means to turn his attention towards medicine. The spiritual treatment, for which he had been sent as a deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ into this world, was the essence of his treatment of physical ailments. Thus, Divine Wisdom conferred upon him a healing touch, taught him to show mercy and affection to the creation and taught him how to tend to the sick and how to nurse them back to health. Allāh ﷻ made him the embodiment of affection and kindness to His creation and placed in him the tendency to show empathy towards the weak and helpless. He enabled him to defend and protect the rights of the masses and inspired him to place a hand of affection upon the heads of those who had lost all hope – those who had become restless by the destruction and devastation of this immediate life.

It would be difficult to find a parallel to match the manner in which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī fulfilled this service of tending to the creation of Allāh ﷻ – even amongst the famous physicians of this world. The very same Hujrah Abū Sa'īd *rahimahullāh* (room of Abū Sa'īd *rahimahullāh*) which had previously been his private room, now served as his medical consulting room. A whole crowd of sick people – whether Hindu, Muslim, young, old, short or tall –

were forever present in this room.

I had forwarded a request to Hadrat's son, Hakīm Hāfīz Maulwī Mas'ūd Ahmād Sāhib rahimahullāh, may *Allāh* perpetuate his greatness, to write on the medical aspects of Hadrat's life. Apart from his reply being valued and reliable, it is worthy of respect and reverence in the literal and figurative sense, due to his affinity with the medical field²⁴.

It is thus quoted:

It would be disrespectful to even consider that which is written about Hadrat Maulānā and his contribution in the medical field to be an example of the full extent of his contribution. However, the astonishing aspect which is worthy of mention is the way in which Hadrat turned his attention towards this field. The time in his life during which he started off in this field is equally astonishing and surprising.

Hadrat Maulānā's maternal uncle, Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib, was a doctor who had studied under one of the most respected medical families in Delhi. His consulting rooms were in Gangoh. During those days, when doctors were a scarcity, he was considered to be a good doctor. Hadrat Maulānā's mother's paternal aunt (*khālah*) had fallen ill and had to bear a lot of discomfort. She did not suffer from any diarrhoea or vomiting, but she had severe pain in her lower abdomen which was causing her great discomfort. Hakīm Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib tended to this aunt. Several days had passed during which he had given her medicines and resorted to various procedures, but the sick woman did not experience any relief.

Hadrat Maulānā was about twenty-two years old at the time. His

²⁴ Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's son was a well-known *hakīm*.

maternal grandmother (*nānī*)²⁵ complained to him saying: "I am not experiencing any relief from Muḥammad Taqī's medicines. Son, you are also a great 'ālim. Why don't you do something and show me a medicine which will remove my pain." Ḥadrat Maulānā remained silent without giving her any reply. However, the excruciating pain which his *nānī* was experiencing most certainly caused him to turn his attention in that direction. When he left his *nānī*'s side, he obtained the book, *Mīzān at-Tibb*, and started studying the section on stomach ailments.

After studying this book, he established an opinion about his *nānī*'s illness. He went to his uncle and asked: "What illness is *nānī Sāhibah* suffering from?" Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib replied: "She is going through menopause [she is not menstruating]." The nephew asked: "Is there any medical classification for the absence of menstruation?" The doctor hesitated and said: "There is no medical classification for it."

Upon hearing his reply, Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "I think *nānī Sāhibah* has a swelling in her abdomen." Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib was after all a doctor and was fully aware of his nephew's sharp intellect. He pondered over this for a while, agreed with his nephew's diagnosis, commended him and expressed his joy. He ordered him saying: "Rashīd Aḥmad! You should treat your *nānī* and you should most certainly look into this [medical] field so that you could be of benefit to Allāh's creation." This was the first time he treated a patient and the success thereof was, in itself, worthy of pride. It was as if success itself had kissed the hand of the Shaykh of its time (*Shaykh-e-waqt*).

Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī treated his *nānī Sāhibah* and, *al-hamdu lillāh*, she was cured soon thereafter. No sooner was she cured

²⁵ She was not his *nānī*, but his *nānī*'s sister. Out of respect, she is referred to as his *nānī*.

when the news started spreading amongst all the women and many of them, who were suffering from longstanding illnesses, started flocking to him for help. In those days, Gangoh had two other doctors apart from Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib. However, the Allāh-bestowed cure and Divine Gift which Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib had been blessed with caused all the people of the village to flock to him for help and rendered the remaining doctors almost redundant. It was Hadrat's practice to consult the book, *Mizān at-Tibb*, whenever he needed reference. He would then ponder and reflect [over the illness and the patient] and follow whatever his instincts guided him towards.

During the time when I²⁶ started my studies in the medical field and Hadrat and I would discuss something, he would say to me: "Bhāi, I am a doctor who has not even read the entire *Mizān at-Tibb* from cover to cover. Ever since I laid hands on *Iksir A'zam* [another medical textbook], I have referred to it whenever I found it necessary. Before that, I only had *Mizān at-Tibb* which I used to refer to."

Despite this, Hadrat Maulānā's treatments and diagnoses were studied and observed at high levels and, let alone those who were not familiar with this field, senior experts were left astounded. His treatments were generally very concise, easily obtainable and single [not compound] medicines. In the beginning there were ordinary doctors in Gangoh and their medicines used to be very ordinary and simple. In fact, by and large, Hadrat Maulānā's medicines consisted of the barks and leaves of various trees. The chemist in Gangoh did not even know how to prepare compound medicines. It was only after Maulānā had started preparing compound medicines whenever necessity dictated, that the people learned how to prepare them. A wise chemist, Pīr Jīyo Muḥammad Jān, taught the art of making

²⁶ Hakīm Mus'ūd Ahmad Sāhib, son of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib.

compound medicines to a relative of his and showed him how to use them.

Hadrat had to interact with the illiterate and ignorant residents of the rural areas quite often. As per their disposition and habit, they would be unable to fully understand the manner in which the medicines needed to be taken, as well as other associated matters. They would repeatedly ask Hadrat to re-explain it to them. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would explain it to them in their colloquial ways of expression and would never become irritated with them. Others who were present would become annoyed by the uncouth manners of these peasants and would feel quite discomforted by it. However, the personality who had reached perfection in culturing and training his *nafs* would not become upset in the least. In fact, not a hint of irritation could be seen on his face. He would console them in a pleasant way and would not turn his attention away from them until they fully understood how to use and consume the medication.

When treating women, he would take their pulse lightly and make a quick observation of their urine sample.²⁷ Out of shame and modesty he would not talk to them. He would treat them with absolute purity in his demeanour and very rarely would he need to consult with, or seek the help of any mid-wife.

Very often, expert physicians and experienced medical practitioners from the surrounding areas would fail in their diagnosis or treatment [of certain patients]. On such occasions they would need to consult Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. By the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, the advice and opinions which he gave them were generally successful in treating these patients.

²⁷ Later on, he became averse to examining urine samples and also had a dream in this regard. He thus stopped examining urine samples. Thereafter he would only check their pulse, listen to their complaints, and prescribe the appropriate medicine.

Hakīm Sarfarāz Khān of Pindolī was a simple-minded doctor who loved the 'ulamā' and the poor. He had been suffering from fever for a very long time. Convinced that he was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, he had become totally despondent with life. On one occasion he visited Hadrat Maulānā and explained his condition to him. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī merely looked at him and prescribed a medication.

The readers might be astonished – or at least find the strange medicine which he prescribed amusing. Hadrat said to him: "Khān Sāhib! Take a few swallowwort leaves which have turned yellow. Burn them over a fire and add some honey to the ash which remains. Take this mixture in the mornings." The Hakīm Sāhib listened to this strange prescription with reservation. However, because he was quite elderly and had lost all hope in life, he thought to himself that he should at least try it out and see what happens. He obtained these leaves, reduced them to ash and started consuming them as Hadrat had advised. Within a few days he noticed a marked difference in his condition and became more confident. He continued using it as was prescribed and, by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, was completely cured within seven to ten days. Healthy and strong, he got up from his sick bed and went to Gangoh to thank Hadrat. This doctor, who had lost all hope in life, is still alive (upon writing this book) and is almost a hundred years old!

In order to overcome the difficulty of labour pains, he would advise the women to tie the roots of the *charchata* tree to their thighs. They would experience immediate relief by the permission of Allāh ﷻ. He would also prescribe black molasses, which they had to drink after it had been boiled.

He would prescribe equal quantities of powdered sugar-candy and gum-mastic, divided into six portions (*māsha* weights) for phlegmatic old fevers.

Once, a woman was suffering from *istihādah* (menstrual bleeding out of the normal menstrual period) for a long time. Her sincere and devoted husband could find no cure (for his own suffering) and, out of desperation, he turned to Hadrat for help. Hadrat prescribed a medicine to ease her condition.

A sixty-year-old grocer once had a facial paralysis. He had consulted a doctor in Gangoh who demanded more money from him than what he could afford. This farmer had an affinity for Hadrat. When Hadrat heard about his plight, he said: "Give him honey and in place of water, make him eat a lot of food." He followed this advice and his face was completely cleared of paralysis by the third or fourth day.

A young, eighteen-year-old boy once came to Hadrat and complained of dropsy (a disease in which water fluid collects in cavities or tissues of the body). Hadrat told him to take fox grapes and endives and to eat *roti* that has been mixed with the extract of these plants. He also suggested that the young boy should be placed inside a warm *tandoor* (heated clay oven). The boy experienced relief within fifteen to twenty days. He is still strong and healthy (upon writing this book) and is thirty-five years old at present.

A grain merchant was totally impotent and came to Hadrat for treatment. Not only will the readers would be surprised, but experts in this field would also need to ponder over Hadrat's prescription – Hadrat Imām Rabbānī advised him to eat three almonds and one date before going to sleep. This person received complete cure through the use of this medication. He regained his potency and, at present (upon writing this book), he is a healthy man with children.

A young Hindu boy was experiencing severe pain due to a swollen gums. He appeared before Hadrat and explained his problem to him. Hadrat prescribed a mixture of just three ingredients: black pepper, pellitory (a Mediterranean plant – the oil is used for relief

of toothache) and mango turmeric. No sooner was this mixture applied, when he experienced a noticeable difference and, within a few applications, he received complete relief.

Once a person told Hadrat that he knew the medicine for the treatment of spleen ailments from which a patient would obtain relief within one day. Hadrat asked him how the medicine worked. He replied that the patient would experience diarrhoea and that he would vomit a lot, but that these symptoms would soon pass and the patient would become healthy once again. The person was not sure of the exact name of the medicine and hesitated slightly. Upon hearing his explanation of the side-effects of the specific medicine, Hadrat thought about it for a moment and gave the name of the medicine. The person was astounded and asked: "How do you know about it?" Hadrat replied: "The name just came into my mind by coincidence."

The treatments which have been mentioned above may not be immediately appreciated by the readers. However, if one should ponder over them deeply, one would be compelled to appreciate them. Like all the other aspects of Hadrat's life, the subject matter on the medical aspect is extensive. Since the compiler's²⁸ aim is to provide examples from each aspect of his life, I did not try to cover every part of the medical aspect. At any rate, it would have been impossible to cover every component thereof. This is because Hadrat's preoccupation with this [medical] field had occurred forty to fifty years before his demise. Nevertheless, I will briefly add a few more points.

Many illnesses which confounded experts in the medical field and which, in the event of their successful treatment thereof, caused

²⁸ Referring to the author, Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī Meerutī Sāhib *rahimullāh*.

them to glow with joy and stir their pride, were very easily solved by Hadrat. This can be attributed to nothing but the Divine Assistance of Allāh ﷻ. Many people suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, hectic fever, leprosy and other serious skin diseases used to come to Hadrat and be cured. Because of the fact that most of these incidents had taken place a long time ago, it is difficult to mention these people by name. I just remembered a person who was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. Many readers would probably know of him and I feel it appropriate to mention him by name. Pīr Jīyo Nūr al-Hasan Gangohī was employed at the government post office in Nāhin. He was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and hectic fever. Twenty-four years have now elapsed (upon writing this book) since he was cured and no sign whatsoever of his illness has remained.

In short, Hadrat's ability to diagnose and treat different ailments was unprecedented and unmatched – even by experts in the field. This, despite the fact that he never undertook any formal study in the medical field. It was his practice to merely do the research whenever necessity called for it. He never had the opportunity to consult with any other doctor. With regards to his explanations ... Nothing more can be said than that he knew whatever he had read on the tip of his fingers. The fact is that whatever he knew was '*ilm ladunni* [knowledge directly inspired by Allāh ﷻ] and, together with that, Divine Assistance.

At one point Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib was afflicted with scabies. It was his duty to remain in Hadrat's service all the time and to sit in his room. He could not use smelly medicine, such as *gandhak*, because its stench would have disturbed Hadrat. To avoid causing difficulty to Hadrat, he did not bother about using any medicine at all and therefore the ailment became worse. When Hadrat learnt about this, he said: "Maulwī Yahyā, when you have scabies, mix your food with rose water and eat it. Make a paste out of rose water and khaashghari Safceda (a

herb) and apply it to your body.” Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib was very concerned about cleanliness and loved cleanliness. This disposition of his had increased even more by remaining in Ḥadrat’s company. He was very happy to follow Ḥadrat’s advice, to use the prescribed medicine, and to eat his food as prescribed. The scabies disappeared within a few days and he was healthy once again.

On one occasion Ḥadrat was explaining the peculiar qualities of tobacco and said: “Tobacco is beneficial against all poisonous animals. The place where one has been bitten by a snake, scorpion or wasp should be rubbed with tobacco. A person who has intestinal worms should be made to eat tobacco leaves. People who eat tobacco are less affected by poisonous animals. A snake does not even go into a field of tobacco plants. A person who needs to relieve himself [in the bush], will not find a more relaxing place than a tobacco field [because he will not have to worry about snakes biting him]. Tobacco and fire are placed at the bottom of a *huqqah* (smoking pipe) and, when it burns, the smoke collects at a certain point. Over a period of time, the smoked tobacco accumulates and hardens. This hardened mixture should be removed and applied as a paste on the snake-bite. This mixture should then be applied to the eyes with an applicator – just as *surmah* (antimony) is applied to the eyes. This should be followed by dissolving the mixture in water and pouring it down the person’s throat. If he has fallen unconscious due to the venom within his body, his mouth should be opened and this liquid should be poured down his throat. *Inshā Allāh*, this whole procedure will help him.”

Doctor Muḥammad Nadhīr Sāhib relates: “I suffered from stomach complaints most of the time and would remain constipated. These stomach ailments affected my brain and other parts of my body and I became weaker by the day. When I went to Gangoh, I explained my physical ailments to Ḥadrat. He said: ‘But you are a doctor!’ I replied: ‘Ḥadrat, I tried many medicines but nothing seems to help.’

He then said: 'Have *ma'jūn falāsifah*, morning and evening.' I started having this and – *al-hamdulillāh* – it continued helping me. Now I have no complaint of the stomach or brain."

In reality, Hadrat's *matabb* (medical consulting room) was not based on books and neither could his knowledge be confined to them. His examination of a patient was not confined to the mere checking of his pulse. Rather, it was the light of his heart which was brighter than a mirror. That is why it was almost impossible for him to err in his diagnosis. He would neither give the name of the illness to the patient nor would he explain it to him. In fact, there were times when a patient did not even have to tell him about his complaint or describe his illness to him. Before the patient could even do this, he would already prescribe a few medicines and remain silent.

Just as his lofty position in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ enabled him to convey spiritual health unto others, they were also able to derive physical benefit from him. With regard to the medicine which he prescribed – people came to the conclusion that, since Allāh had Willed for their illness to depart, He was also the One Who conveyed them to Hadrat and Hadrat's prescription was thus merely an 'excuse' or a means through which Divine Will had to come to pass. Therefore, they would feel the benefits of the medicine from the moment they started taking it and would experience complete recovery within a few days. This fact became very well-known and was the reason why many Hindus thought that they would die if they did not consult Hadrat.

When Hadrat's son, Hakīm Maulwī Mas'ūd Ahmād Sāhib, completed his medical studies in Delhi – having achieved excellent results – he returned to Gangoh with the highly respected medical degree from Madrasah Tibbīyyah and started practising as a Hakīm. Hadrat Maulānā then gave up his medical practice and handed over the responsibility of serving Allāh's creation to his righteous son.

Thereafter, whenever a patient would come to consult him, he would say: "You may now go to Mas'ūd Aḥmad."

Despite this, many devoted patients – especially those from the villages – would say to him: "Hadrat, we will only receive benefit from your medicines." He made every effort to abstain from this occupation. If anyone insisted, he would say: "Mas'ūd Aḥmad has come from Delhi. He has obtained a formal degree in this field. I only prescribed medicine out of necessity while I did not even study this subject. I used to prescribe anything and everything. My prescription was like a child shooting an arrow which occasionally struck its target."

However, no matter what he said, those whose hearts were settled by his Divinely-inspired diagnosis and treatment would refer to him and no one else. They would say to him: "Hadrat, you just have to utter the name of any medicine. Even if you tell us to have some dust, we would consider it more beneficial than an elixir [a magical mixture containing a miraculous cure]."

Hadrat had to fulfil the wishes of those who were devoted to him and, as usual, he would prescribe some simple medicine or some medical herbs as a treatment.

ACCUSATION OF INSURGENCY

A poet says:

*What an act of oppression
when the Messiah of the era is accused of being a rebel,
a mutineer and a blood-shedder!*

*How, and with what audacity, can the ascetic
who is continuously enduring trials and tribulations
be labelled as a rebel and conniving person?*

At the beginning of the year 1276 A.H. (1859 C.E.), government

officials accused Hadrat Imām Rabbānī of being an insurgent and of joining the ranks of the mutineers. This terrifying story forms an intrinsic part of his life and we feel it necessary to relate it briefly from beginning to end.

In Ramadān 1273 A.H. (May 1857 C.E.), such turmoil erupted that the mere thought of it would cause one's hair to stand on end. Let alone India, in the entire world no story was more famous. It was the final moments of the Mogul Empire and the last scene of the over-flowing royal cup. It was a disturbing time for the unfortunate and rejected family members of the king of Delhi, Bahādur Shāh Zafar. False rumours were being spread and all kinds of secret, clandestine meetings were being held in order to start a revolution. The population was on the brink of destruction. They saw whatever fate had in store for them and their progeny is still seeing it today.

Those over whom death hovered, did not value the peaceful and calm era of the company [referring to the English East-Indian Company] and they raised the flag of insurgency against their government. Armies defected and disobeyed their ruler. The closed doors of bloodshed and murder were opened, and in their brave enthusiasm, they 'shot themselves in the foot' [caused themselves a lot of harm]. During these terrifying times, thousands of innocent people were hanged. Their young children were orphaned and their wives were widowed. Insecurity spread through all the cities and villages. The king had hardly been deposed, when the enmity among the population, which had remained dormant for years, suddenly came to the fore. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what made them think that this was the time to exact revenge. Wherever you turned your gaze, there was fighting. In whichever direction you turned, there was war.

Thānabhawan was also affected by this same traumatic situation and, through the information [or disinformation] of Qādī Mahbūb 'Alī Khān, a case was opened against Hadrat Maulānā. The

background to this event follows:

The *ra'īs* (chief) of Thānabhawan, Qādī 'Ināyat 'Alī Khān, had a younger brother by the name of 'Abd ar-Rahīm Khān. The latter went to Sahāranpūr to purchase elephants where a certain *baniyā* (a niggardly Hindu businessman) – who was an old enemy of this unfortunate fellow – had been awaiting his arrival for several days. He was especially antagonistic towards 'Abd ar-Rahīm because of some land ownership disputes. Upon seeing him, this enemy of his considered it to be the ideal opportunity for revenge. He immediately rushed to the local court where he accused 'Abd ar-Rahīm Khān and his brother [the chief] of insurgency and rebellion. He claimed that 'Abd ar-Rahīm had come to Sahāranpūr to purchase elephants which he intended to send to Delhi as reinforcements. It was a time of suspicion and precaution and thus the authorities proceeded immediately and arrested the *ra'īs*. He was subsequently hanged and this righteous landlord of Thānabhawan, who was loyal to his government, was separated from his wronged brother forever.

The result of this insecure situation was that the general residents of the village felt as if their guide and administrator had been removed from them. They felt that they had no one to solve their *Shar'ī* and everyday disputes and no one whose opinion they could trust. They went to A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and said: "It is difficult for us to live without the supervision of a ruler. Because of the uprising of the insurgents, the government has absolved itself of providing security and announced that each person should make his own arrangements for his protection. You are our religious leader and we request that you should accept the responsibility of arranging our worldly affairs as well. We want you to become our Amīr al-Mu'minīn and see to our disputes."

A'lā Hadrat had to accede to their request. He needed to console them. So, for a few days, he also passed judgement on some of their

civil and criminal cases. This issue enabled certain people to accuse him of joining the ranks of the insurgents and gave some spies the opportunity to spread false information. [At that point] Ten years had elapsed since Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had taken A'lā Hadrat as his mentor and he regularly used to go there [to Thānabhawan]. Since insecurity had spread all around, he could find no better place to stay than at A'lā Hadrat's [*khānqāh*]. At the same time, A'lā Hadrat needed a *maulwī* who could handle legal matters and who could pass judgement on Shar'ī issues. He needed someone who would be able to assist him in proclaiming the truth. Consequently, Imām Rabbānī, Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib, and a few other attendants remained in Thānabhawan.

One thing is certain – while most people remained locked within the confines of their homes during these terrifying times, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and other personalities continued with their daily activities with absolute peace of mind. They continued with whatever occupations they were engaged in previously. They were not distressed in the least and were not distracted for a moment. Whenever he or any of his companions needed to go to Shāmlī, Kirāna or Muzaffarnagar, they would go calmly and peacefully and return the same way with absolute peace of mind.

Hadrat had to face the troublemakers who were moving around in droves. He most certainly had his sword at his side for the sake of self-protection and he walked in the midst of gun fights like a lion. On one occasion, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī], A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib, were all walking together when they had to face some musketeers. This brave and courageous group [referring to Hadrat and his companions] neither fled nor moved away when they were faced with these people who were rebelling against the government. They stood their ground like solid mountains and were prepared to sacrifice their lives. It was a time when the anger of a lion would have been reduced to nothing and the bravest among people would

have shuddered, but, Glory to Allāh for the bravery and courage which was exhibited by this group when they were faced with this terrifying situation. Imagine – these few, poor men were standing with their swords in their hands, facing a large band of musketeers and yet they remained steadfast! It was as if the ground had grasped their feet [preventing them from fleeing or falling down]. The rebels fired shots at them. A bullet struck Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib rahimahullāh below his navel and he was martyred.

At one point [during this battle], Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm suddenly held his head and sat down. Those who were present were convinced that he had been shot in the head and that the bullet had entered from the other side. A'lā Hadrat rushed towards him, placed his hand on the wound and asked: "Miyā, what happened?" His turban was removed and his head examined. There was no sign or indication of any bullet, but his clothes were soaked in blood.

It was accepted that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's relationship with A'lā Hadrat was that of a *khādim* (attendant) and *murīd*. In addition to this, he had sincere affinity for Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib [whom he regarded as *chachā pīr* – his Shaykh's brother]. Hāfiz Sāhib also loved Imām Rabbānī dearly. When they were on the battleground, he called Maulānā to his side and said: "Miyā Rashīd, when I pass away, you must definitely be at my side." A short while later – as suspected – Hāfiz Sāhib fell to the ground. When the bullet struck him, blood started gushing out of his body. The moment he fell, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī rushed to his side and immediately carried him over his shoulders. He carried Hāfiz Sāhib to a nearby Musjid, where he placed his head on his thighs and commenced reciting the Qur'ān.

I heard from eye witnesses of their astonishment at Hadrat's bravery that day. He calmly sat down – all alone in the serene Musjid – and witnessed the scene of his beloved uncle's journey to the Hereafter and the final moments of his beloved's life. He had

tears in his eyes and the Qur'ān on his tongue. He continued in this way until Hāfiz Sāhib rahimahullāh passed away – still with his head on Imām Rabbānī's thighs. Hadrat got up, happy at having been able to fulfil his uncle's wishes [of remaining at his side]. I heard from our pious elders that the *nisbat* (a close connection with Allāh ﷻ) which Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib Shahīd rahimahullāh had been blessed with, was transferred unto Hadrat during that time.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

“This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ
which He bestows on whomever He Wills.”

Allāh! Allāh! This was the *buzurg* who, ten years prior, interceded before A'lā Hadrat to accept Hadrat's *bay'ah* and displayed the affection which he felt for him through this single good word. Now was the time for Hadrat – in this final hour – to fulfil his final request. It was the Decree of Allāh ﷻ which he fulfilled out at a time when there was no one else nearby – no relative and no outsider. When he eventually received some relief from the troublemakers, Hadrat carried the martyr over his shoulders and placed him down upon a bed. Then the bed was carried – passed on from one person to the next – until, finally, he was buried on the western side of Thānabhawan.

The insurgency and trouble subsided, the rule of the affectionate government gained the upper hand once again, and the rebels were destroyed. These cowardly troublemakers who had to resort to trickery in order to save their own lives, started spreading false accusations and portrayed themselves as well-wishers of the government. They suddenly changed their loyalties and accused certain secluded and pious personalities of insurgency. They misinformed the government by claiming that these [pious elders] were the ringleaders of the trouble in Thānabhawan. They told the authorities that it was these *maulwīs* who had attacked the revenue

office in Shāmlī and that it was they who had gathered the hay of the villages around the revenue office and set it alight. When not even half the building had burnt and the fire had not been extinguished as yet, it was these *maulwīs* who had rushed through the flames into the burning building and looted the government treasury.

In actual fact, these poor souls who were wrapped in shawls, living in abject poverty and enduring hardship were very far removed from all this trouble. Had they bothered to involve themselves in disputes over matters related to authority and wealth, they would not have been in the condition in which they were living at that time. One would have been a deputy somewhere, another would have been a major, and another would have been in the lofty court buildings, and so on. They would have been living in palatial homes and not in these small rooms which reminds one of the grave and they would not have been lying on these bare floors with nothing but straw mats upon them. However – as a poet says:

*Who is going to listen to my story ...
and that too, [one] which I am relating myself?*

The major problem was that they were never given an opportunity to stand before the rulers. They were never given the opportunity to stand as accused criminals, whereby they could have learnt how to prove their innocence. They neither had any worldly honour which people could consider, nor any trickery or 'gift of the gab' which they could resort to. They neither possessed the money to raise the issue in court through a lawyer, nor did they ever see or hear of such a blind war of rebellion whereby they could have learnt of its consequences. They turned to their Master [Allāh ﷻ] and awaited whatever decision He was to pass from the unseen. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ! They remained true to their word and none of the false accusations against them held any weight. However, they were shaken by this Divine Test. They bore many difficulties, suffered

anguish and remained in hiding, but the truth triumphed in the end. The genuine were separated from the counterfeit and these pure souls and bodies, who possessed angelic qualities, were left unharmed.

It was during this entire incident, that A'lā Hadrat bid farewell to his beloved 'sons', Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī] and Imām Rabbānī. The horizon of India no longer appealed to him and these two sons were separated from their spiritual father. A'lā Hadrat concealed himself for a few months in Ambāla, Tigrī, Panjsāla and other villages and eventually proceeded – via Sindh and Karachi – to Arabia. He bid farewell to India forever, boarded a ship, and set sail for Makkah Mu'azzamah. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib returned to Deoband, and Imām Rabbānī returned to Gangoh.

During these days of hiding, Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm had the opportunity of making several trips to Almiyā Magthala, Lādwah, Panjsāla and Jamnā. Imām Rabbānī spent most of his time in Gangoh or Rāmpūr. However, he was overcome by the yearning to meet his spiritual guide for the last time in India and thus he went to Ambāla, Tigrī and Panjsāla secretly in order to fulfil this yearning. Thereafter he returned home. Some very astonishing events took place during those days. If we were to confine ourselves to merely relating the open *karāmāt* (miracles), we would need many pages to describe them. I am therefore leaving out the details and confining myself to the essential subject matter.

A warrant of arrest had been issued against all three of them and a reward was promised for the person who provided details which would result in their arrest. Consequently, many people were on the lookout for them and they were searching high and low. A'lā Hadrat bid farewell to his hometown and departed with the intention of emigrating to the Haramayn [Makkah and Madīnah]. He was especially attached to Maulānā Gangohī and went to Gangoh to bid his final farewell to him. Hadrat Maulānā's pure and

chaste daughter – the mother of Hāfiz Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib – was two years old at the time.

When A'lā Hadrat reached Panjsāla, district Ambāla, he stayed over in the deserted and dark cottage of Rāu 'Abdullāh Khān which was situated next to his stables. One day, he performed *wudū'* in that very same cottage and laid out his *musallā* with the intention of performing *chāshī salāh*. He told his devoted associates who were present at the time: "You have my permission to leave. I will perform my *nafl salāh*." Rāu 'Abdullāh Khān Sāhib was a devoted and well-known *murīd* of A'lā Hadrat. He was a prosperous landowner and was considered to be a respectable person by the government. He was fully aware of the accusations which had been made against A'lā Hadrat and the great worldly danger which he was placing himself in by opening his house to him. After all, aiding an insurgent is also considered to be an act of insurgency. Despite this, his intense love for *Dīn* and his devotion to A'lā Hadrat caused him not to bother about his wealth or his life.

Glory to Allāh! When A'lā Hadrat commenced his *salāh*, Rāu 'Abdullāh Khān left the cottage and rolled down the shutter. As he walked towards the stable door, he suddenly saw the police arriving. He was left confounded. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows who the spy was that had led them to the cottage in which A'lā Hadrat was hiding at that exact time. When the police reached the stable, the officer smiled at Rāu Sāhib and struck up a casual conversation with him. He was trying to conceal the actual reason for his arrival at that unusual hour. However, the intelligent and experienced Rāu Sāhib had immediately understood the true reason for their sudden arrival. He remained unmoved and unwavering. He was not concerned about his honour or his life and was prepared to lose his authority and sacrifice his properties. He was prepared to be dragged to jail or to be hanged, and was willing to continue his journey to the Hereafter. He did not bother in the least about any of these things. His sole concern, fear, grief and sorrow was this: How

could the master be apprehended at the slave's house and how could his Shaykh – who was more beloved to him than his own life – be dragged from his home in chains?

At the same time, Rāu Sāhib was a young-at-heart, resolute, very brave and strong-willed Rājput. He suppressed his anxiety and did not permit any sign of trembling or fear to show on his face or body. He responded with a smile and extended his hand.

The officer dismounted his horse and said: "I have heard many praises about one of your horses. That is why I have come here without informing you beforehand." The officer started walking towards the stable. Rāu Sāhib said: "Very well," and walked with him. He took him on a tour of all his horses in a very casual manner. The officer stared repeatedly at Rāu Sāhib's calm and relaxed face. He became angry at the disinformation which he had received from the spy, his failure in his mission, and the hardship which he had had to endure in undertaking the journey. After viewing all the horses, the officer eventually walked towards the room in which the spy had informed him A'lā Hadrat was staying. While walking towards it, he said: "What do you keep inside this cottage? Do you fill it with hay?" As he said this, he opened the shutter. The thoughts that must have gone through Rāu Sāhib's mind at that moment are known to him alone. He realized that the final hour of Divine Decree had arrived. His cup of life was about to overflow. After fully accepting the Decree of Allāh ﷻ, he said: "Yes [I fill it with hay]." Upon saying that, he awaited the order for his own arrest.

Now look at the wonder of Divine Protection ...

The door was open, the *musallā* was laid out on the bed, the water jug was placed to one side and the *wudū'* water was splashed all over the floor, but there was no sign whatsoever of A'lā Hadrat. The officer was astounded, while Rāu 'Abdullāh Khān was rejoicing from within at the *karāmat* of his Shaykh. It was a unique

scene! The officer neither spoke nor made any inquiry. He merely looked from one side to the other. Eventually he concluded that the spy had deceived him and said: "Khān Sāhib, why is this water jug here and why is there water all over the floor?" Rāu Sāhib replied: "Janāb, we Muslims perform our salāh here and we have to wash our faces and hands when performing wudū'. Just ten minutes before your arrival, I was making preparations to perform my salāh."

The officer smiled and said: "Is the Musjid set aside for your salāh, or is this room in the stable?" Rāu Sāhib immediately responded: "Janāb, the Musjid is for the fard salāh, while the nafl salāh is reserved for private places like this where no one knows about it." Upon hearing this reply – which left him speechless – the officer closed the shutter. After looking around the stables with searching eyes, he went outside, mounted his horse and departed. Before he left, he said these words: "Rāu Sāhib! Forgive me for disturbing you so much and, despite this, we are not interested in purchasing any of your horses."

When the police officers disappeared out of sight, Rāu Sāhib returned to the cottage, opened the shutter and saw A'lā Hadrat sitting peacefully on his musallā after having completed his salāh.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib was in hiding in Deoband. One day, there were no men in the women's section of the house. He came near the stairs and announced [to the women]: "Observe purdah, I want to go outside." He went out of the house and saw the police arriving. They had come to arrest him [but did not know his identity]. Look at the Power of Allāh! One of the officers came to him and asked: "Where is Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim?" He took one step forward, looked at the spot where his foot was before that, and said: "He was here just now." As he said this, he continued walking. In the meantime, the police went inside the house, searched it, and left without any success.

No matter what, these personalities were certainly innocent. However, the rumours that had been spread by the enemies had caused them to be labelled as insurgents, troublemakers, criminals and state-enemies. They were searching for them, but Allāh's ﷻ Protection was over their heads. That is why no harm could afflict them. These personalities were sincere well-wishers of their beneficent government and proved to be such till the very end. Yes, a short-lived division among friends had been written in their destiny. They had to bear it, and they bore it well. In the midst of all this, displays of *karāmāt*, supernatural feats, extraordinary events, Divine Protection, and truthfulness were all exhibited. After this incident, Maulānā used to stay in the Musjid and no one interfered with him.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī Quṭb al-Irshād Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had to pass a severe test in this regard. He was arrested and had to spend six months in jail. After all the investigations, inquiries and inquests had been completed, his innocence was proven as clear as the sun at mid-day. It was concluded that the accusation of joining the troublemakers was a total lie and absolute slander. He was freed and returned to his beloved home – safe and sound.

HIS ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, RELEASE AND INNOCENCE

*When you take away the compassionate benefactor of people,
you take away the [one who tends to] the garden of Islam.
It is as though the world is being placed in a well of blood
and as though the second Yūsuf
– though innocent – is being punished.*

After bidding farewell to A'lā Hadrat, Imām Rabbānī returned home very sad and grief-stricken. Numerous rumours started spreading, thousands of lies were spoken and smear campaigns

were initiated. Wherever one went, one would hear of the execution of such and such chief, or the murder of such and such person. Everywhere people were talking about a 'certain person' who was suspected of being an insurgent, declared a criminal and hanged, or that a 'certain person' was in hiding and that the authorities were searching for him. In short, it was an awfully terrifying time in which every woman perceived the danger of being widowed and every child had either the fear, or the grief of being orphaned.

Hadrat Maulānā knew that his name had been included on the list of suspects and that his name was on the list of criminals who were to be arrested. He also knew that the police intended searching for him in order to arrest him. However, he was a mountain of fortitude and accepted the Order of Allāh ﷻ. He knew that, seeing as he was in reality a loyal subject, false accusations would not affect him in the least. He knew that if he were to be killed – the ruler was ultimately the king and had the right to do as he pleased. Thus, he had no concern whatsoever for his own life. However, whenever he was separated from his beloved ones, he would utter the following poem:

شَيْتَانِ لَوْ بَكَتِ الدِّمَاءُ عَلَيْهِمَا – عَيْنَايَ حَتَّى تُؤْذِنَا بِدَهَابِ
لَمْ يَتْلُغَا الْمِغْشَارَ مِنْ حَقَّيْهِمَا – فَقَدْ الشَّبَابَ وَفُرْقَةَ الْأَخْبَابِ

*If my eyes were to shed tears of blood over two things
to the extent that I lose my eyesight,
they would still not fulfil one tenth of their rights.*

These two things are:

*The passing away of my youth,
and the separation from my loved-ones.*

The first was the grief of separation from his spiritual father, A'lā Hadrat, which left him remaining behind in India as an orphan. This grief did not permit him to experience any comfort – no matter in which posture he was. This sorrow would not allow him to sleep at

night and his days were spent worrying about how he could get the opportunity to visit him one more time. Even if he were to go – where would he go to, and how would he meet him? He neither knew where he was living, nor where exactly he had gone into hiding.

He eventually received information that A'lā Hadrat was in Panels. So he said *Bismillāh* and left from Gangoh. He would walk by night and remain concealed during the day – cutting across thorny jungles. He eventually reached Tigrī and stopped over at the house of Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Rāipūrī. Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib was still a child at the time and it was the first time he had the opportunity of meeting Imām Rabbānī, and the first time that he saw the 'sun of this world' as a guest in his house. Hadrat Maulānā affectionately placed his hand on his head, made *du'ā* and blew on him.

Hadrat Maulānā 'Ābd ar-Rahīm Sāhib's father, Rāu Ashraf 'Alī Khān, was a prosperous landowner of Tigrī and a very pious and religious person. Rāu Sāhib did not know Hadrat Maulānā, but he considered it to be an excellent coincidence to have this rare jewel [Imām Rabbānī] at his house without having to go out in search of him. Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib was only three or four years old at the time. Rāu Sāhib hosted this travelling guest with unique sincerity, and by that evening he started requesting Hadrat to accept his pledge of *bay'ah*. Hadrat Maulānā replied in the negative and said: "A'lā Hadrat is still around. If you really want to do this, then consider this time to be an ideal opportunity." Rāu Sāhib accepted his advice and expressed his desire to accompany him. Hadrat Maulānā related his own lack of resources to him, as well as the dangerous situation in which he found himself and explained to him that it was not advisable for him to accompany him. However, he told him that he could follow him the following day and promised that he would personally intercede in his favour before A'lā Hadrat.

Hadrat spent one night there, continued on his journey and went on to meet A'lā Hadrat. Rāu Sāhib arrived the following day, and pledged *bay'ah* under circumstances which could be referred to as 'the final hours of one's life' [because A'lā Hadrat was continuing on his journey]. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī repeatedly asked him to take him with, but A'lā Hadrat did not accept his request and told him that this was the Order of Allāh ﷻ. He said to Imām Rabbānī: "Go! I am handing you over to Allāh ﷻ," and thus he bid him farewell. Hadrat Maulānā had no alternative but to separate himself from A'lā Hadrat and his eyes were filled with tears. A'lā Hadrat consoled him saying: "Miyā Rashīd Ahmad! Allāh ﷻ is going to take a lot of good work from you. Do not worry. I will certainly meet you before I leave India. May Allāh ﷻ give you a long life and cause you to progress in rank." He continued embracing him for a long time. Due to the fatherly affection and *murabbī* love which A'lā Hadrat had for him, he started crying and that caused Hadrat to cry as well.

Hadrat headed for Gangoh. Upon his arrival he noticed that every child was worried and every member of his family was trembling and distressed, because a warrant for his arrest had already been issued and they were expecting the police to arrive soon. Upon the insistence of his relatives he went to Rāmpūr, the village of his paternal family, and stayed over in the house of Hakīm Diya'ad-Dīn Sāhib.

A few days after his arrival in Rāmpūr, Guardian Colonel Francis, together with an informer by the name of Ghulām 'Alī of Malīpūr, district Sahāranpūr, arrived in Gangoh with seventy horsemen. A few of the horsemen were Muslims, but the majority of them were Sikhs. When they reached Gangoh, they immediately started searching for Hadrat. All seventy horsemen scattered into different directions in search of Hadrat. They searched all the corners, alleys, Musjids, and *khānqāh* rooms.

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib was Ḥaḍrat Maulānā's intimate friend and maternal cousin. His physical appearance and demeanour was very similar to that of Ḥaḍrat. When the police entered the Musjid, he was sitting in one corner with his head lowered, fully engrossed in *murāqabah* (meditation). One of the policeman rushed towards him, struck him hard against his neck, caught hold of him and said: "Stand up! Why are you sitting here with your neck lowered?" The poor Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr raised his head and saw himself being apprehended in the blink of an eye. He stood up immediately. He was marched to the entrance of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā's house and ordered: "Take us around the house so that we may search it and see what weapons you have." Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr continued receiving a beating and humiliation, but did not say: "I am not Rashīd Aḥmad."

The chief eventually realized this was not the person they were searching for, that he had been apprehended because of a mistaken identity, and that the actual 'criminal' was in Rāmpūr. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib was released, the house searched, and the police proceeded to Rāmpūr. It is believed that Ḥakīm Aḥmad Amīr Bakhsh had been the one who informed the police that Ḥaḍrat was in Rāmpūr. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

The police reached Rāmpūr and Ḥaḍrat Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣāhib was arrested from the house of Ḥakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Ṣāhib. This occurred towards the end of 1275 A.H., or at the beginning of 1276 A.H. Ḥaḍrat's daughter, Ṣafīyyah Khātūn, was about two years old at the time. Ḥaḍrat neither resisted his arrest nor did he display any defiance. That is why he was neither harmed in any way nor despised. He was merely surrounded by guards from all sides, shackled, placed on an ox-wagon and taken to Sahāranpūr.

The oxen were quite swift and the police had been instructed to hurry. Consequently, the dust from the gravel road blew into the

eyes of the pedestrians. The poor, distressed and worried Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and his elderly father, Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib – who had raised Ḥadrat Maulānā as his own son – were following bare-footed behind the swift-moving ox-wagon. They were neither conscious of their bodies and lives, nor did it even occur to them that it was not possible for them to reach Sahāranpūr on foot – not at such a swift speed. They had had no food or drink since that morning. They found themselves fully immersed in a dangerous and distressful situation. Their eyes were shut because of the dust and their feet were injured by the thorns of acacia trees. They were dazed, dust-laden and walking without knowing where they were heading. What they were doing? At one point they eventually fell unconscious and lost sight of their beloved. The moment Ḥadrat Maulānā reached Sahāranpūr he was taken to prison, locked up in the cells, and placed under the supervision of military guards.

When Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr regained consciousness, he was once again overtaken by the concern to forge ahead. He eventually reached Sahāranpūr – walking and falling, walking and falling – and could see the place from a distance, but was not concerned about the inhabitants. His sole objective was Rashīd Aḥmad. However, the two of them were in two completely different worlds [one was a free man, the other was a prisoner]. He certainly heard that Maulānā had been taken to prison. A resident of Sahāranpūr by the name of Akbar 'Alī – who was from the progeny of a Shaykh – was one of the people who had been instructed to transport Ḥadrat to the prison. He was a kind Muslim and was horrified at what had transpired. When he saw Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr, he looked around [to make sure that no one was watching him] and said: "I have just returned after transporting Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad to prison."

These poor people did not even know where the prison was. Even if they knew, what could they have done about it? A prison has high walls with several inner sections, within which a criminal is taken and locked up in one of several cells. He stood outside the prison –

but who would bother about an outsider? He eventually lost hope and started crying. There he sat down on the dusty road. Akbar 'Alī felt sorry for him and tried to console him.

In short, although Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr was hungry and thirsty himself, he was more concerned about how hungry Hadrat Maulānā must be. He went around asking for help and eventually managed to send some food to Hadrat via a person who was from Nānauta. From inside the prison, Hadrat sent a message which was written in coal on a rock: "Do not worry. *Al-hamdulillāh!* I am comfortable." Nevertheless, he and all his associates spent several days crying over Hadrat.

What can be said about the woman behind the veil [i.e. Hadrat's wife] whose master had been arrested in a manner and under circumstances which would cause even men to tremble? But, Glory to Allāh ﷻ for the patience and fortitude which she possessed. Her small daughter – that is, the mother of Hāfiẓ Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib – was in her lap, but she was engrossed in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. The world appeared dark and darkness had pervaded everything, but she never despaired of Allāh's ﷻ Mercy. Although she was certainly worried about being widowed and about her small, innocent child being orphaned, she never uttered a single syllable of complaint. Hāfiẓ Ya'qūb's mother [who was the small, two-year-old girl at that time] relates: "When all this fighting started and there was some commotion outside our house and inside the Musjid, a girl carried me and took me outside. I remember this much only." Glory to Allāh! Look at her memory! She was only two years old and yet she could remember this much!

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's wife – the mother of Hakīm Sāhib – was a *waliyah kamilah* (a perfect *walī* of Allāh ﷻ). The following account is sufficient to display her patience and fortitude. Her affectionate father, Maulwī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib, had been martyred just a few months earlier in Jehjar. Now her beloved husband, at whose

side she had spent her life and to whom she was attached, had been imprisoned. His life was in danger, she was waiting for the judge's decision, the fear and worry about the final outcome was weighing heavily on her chest.

What could a woman who is confined to her home, who is in *purdah* and the embodiment of chastity do? She could neither be with him, nor could she go to the court. Thus, she sat in a corner of her house with a *tasbīh* (prayer-beads) in her hand, repeated the verses of the Qur'ān, stretched out her hands in front of Allāh ﷻ and made *du'ā'* unto Him.

What details can we provide about this traumatic incident? In summery, Hadrat Maulānā remained in a holding cell for three or four days after which he was taken to prison for fifteen days. Many investigations were conducted, he was interrogated several times, and eventually it was decided that – seeing as this incident had taken place in Thānabhawan – this case should be handed over and handled in Muzaffarnagar.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was escorted under military guard. They held their unsheathed swords in their hands and made him walk to Muzaffarnagar via Deoband. Upon reaching there, he was handed over to the Muzaffarnagar prison. I heard that Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm had arrived beforehand and had stood at a distance from the road in order to meet Hadrat as he passed Deoband. Although he was in danger himself, his yearning to see Hadrat did not permit him to remain in hiding. They greeted each other from a distance, looked at one another, smiled at each other, and through gestures they reminded each other of Allāh's ﷻ True Promise of victory for the sincere, and for those who remain patient and steadfast in the face of trials and tribulations.

Hadrat had to remain in the Muzaffarnagar prison for about six months. During the course of this time, his qualities of

steadfastness, bravery, fortitude, determination, reliance upon Allāh ﷻ (*tawakkul*), acceptance of fate, piety, courage – and above all – his obedience to Allāh ﷻ and his love for Allāh ﷻ, which had penetrated every vein in his body, all displayed themselves in an unparalleled and unique manner. From the very beginning, right until the very end – during this entire period of incarceration – he never missed a single *ṣalāh*. While he was imprisoned, he would receive clean, pure water for the purpose of *wuḍū'* from other Muslims. He gained the confidence and devotion of the other prisoners and oppressed inmates. A vast majority of them pledged *bay'ah* at his hands. Even in his prison cell, he used to perform *ṣalāh* in congregation. He spent all his time tranquilly progressing in spiritual rank. He was never unmindful of both external and internal guidance and instruction. Together with advising and teaching the prisoners, he used to explain the meanings of the Qur'ān to them and call them towards Allāh ﷻ. He would remain engaged in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and teach the prisoners the lessons of patience and gratitude. At times he would be overwhelmed by imparting knowledge, while at other times by imparting the *ṭarīqah* and *sulūk*.

Whenever he was summoned to court, he would present himself and speak with confidence. He would answer the questions which were posed to him without any hesitation. He never suppressed any word or twisted any letter when he spoke. He never resorted to concealing any information in order to save his life. Whenever he said anything, he spoke the truth. Whenever he replied to anything, he said it exactly as it was, because he believed that Allāh ﷻ was present and that He was listening to every word he was saying.

The following are some of the questions which were posed to him and the answers which he provided:

1. "Rashīd Aḥmad, did you support the troublemakers and were you the cause of any trouble?" His reply: "It is not our

work to cause trouble, nor are we supporters of troublemakers."

2. "Did you raise weapons against the government?" His reply: He pointed to his *tasbīh* and said: "This is our weapon."
3. At times the judge would threaten him and tell him that they would mete out the full punishment to him. To this he would reply: "There is nothing wrong in doing that, provided that the full punishment is meted out after a full investigation has been done."
4. On one occasion the judge asked him: "What is your occupation?" He replied: "Nothing, except landownership."

Full investigations were carried out and they had made every effort in their inquiry, but they could not prove anything. They received rational replies to every question. He was eventually declared innocent and the verdict was issued: "Rashīd Aḥmad has been acquitted."

On one occasion, a person asked Hadrat Imām Rabbānī: "When A'lā Hadrat met you the final time, he promised you saying: 'Do not worry. I will meet you before I leave for Arabia.' However, you were in prison at that time and A'lā Hadrat emigrated to Makkah before your release." This person was trying to say that A'lā Hadrat had merely uttered those pleasing words in order to console him and that he had not fulfilled his promise. Hadrat replied in a very soft tone: "A'lā Hadrat was not one to break his promises." It subsequently came to light that, despite the strict security around the prison, A'lā Hadrat had entered the prison and had spoken to Hadrat for several hours. He returned that very same night, and thereafter he departed for Arabia.

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib relates: "Hakīm Sāhib was a *murīd* of A'lā Hadrat and a resident of Ambālah. He was with me on a hajj journey. He used to relate that, during the time while Maulānā

Gangohī was in jail, A'lā Hadrat spoke to them one day, saying: 'Miyā, did any of you hear anything? Has the order for Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad's execution been issued?' The attendants replied: 'Hadrat, we do not know. We have not heard anything as yet.' He said: 'A verdict has already been passed. Let's go!' Saying this, he got up and left."

Hakīm Sāhib explains: "It was the monsoon season and A'lā Hadrat and I – and most probably Maulwī Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib Kāndhelwī – left after *maghrib*. We walked out of the town and, after some time, A'lā Hadrat went and sat down on the lawn. He remained silent for quite some time, raised his head and said: 'Let's go! No one can execute Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad. Allāh ﷻ still has to take a lot of work from him.' This prediction was confirmed a few days later. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ Alone.

At one time Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and his father, Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib, were in Muzaffarnagar with some associates, friends and relatives. They were going through great turmoil and restlessness and six months had passed in this condition. They jumped with joy the moment they heard the good news. Their faces, which had become gloomy, were radiant and glowing once again. Their hearts – which had either become closed like a bud or dry like a dead flower – were suddenly revived and refreshed once again by the blowing of this gentle morning breeze.

They hastened to the police station and urged them to speed up the process of Hadrat's release. They managed to get their beloved out of jail and made him get onto an ox-wagon. The poor, excited Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr – who, at that point, was panting due to his excitement and running around – was very fearful of the enemy. He feared that they might change their decision and, for that reason, he wanted to get Hadrat out of their sight as quickly as possible. He instructed the driver of the ox wagon to move as swiftly as possible, to urge his oxen as much as he could, and promised him that he

would be rewarded well. Blinkers were placed over the oxen's eyes and they were urged ahead. They all reached Gangoh while praising and thanking Allāh ﷻ – the Only Being who can fulfil all our needs and solve all our problems.

A poet says:

*Countless expressions of gratitude,
for the withered garden has become lush once again.
The eye, which had become blind, has regained its sight.
We now see waves in the previously dry ocean.
Clouds of Mercy have returned to Gangoh once again.*

The lost lustre of Gangoh had returned. The dried-out splendour of the village came to life again. The eyes, which had become accustomed to crying, regained their lost sparkle. The dead hearts of the faces which had been covered with death, were once again revived. Every leaf on the trees expressed its joy at the arrival of the embodiment of the Sharī'ah. Every corner of every house and building called out its congratulations upon the arrival of the Shaykh who was the messiah of the *nafs*. The entire family gathered. Friends and relatives arrived from distant places. Relatives gathered together, and distant and close relatives filled themselves with the honour of visiting Hadrat. While in prison, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had continued doing the work with which he had occupied himself before his imprisonment and, when he returned after his release, his main concern was regarding the same work. Consequently, he cleaned his *khānqāh* – which was in a desolate state because it had not been attended to for eight to nine months – and resumed his lessons.

Although Imām Rabbānī continued with spiritual training after his release, he remained more occupied in teaching the sciences and branches of the Sharī'ah. A few years later, after returning to India from his third hajj, he became tremendously occupied in this occupation [of teaching]. He took the responsibility upon himself to

complete the *Daurah* of the *Sihāh Sittah* in one year. He devoted himself to this service, and thus, it was as if he had made the announcement to the world: "Anyone who wishes to study *Dīn* and learn *Aḥādīth* is most welcome. The door to the garden, which was prepared by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, is now open. The table-mat (*dastarkhwān*), laden with Allāh's delicious bounties of the Hereafter, has now been spread wide open. You may come and eat as much as you like."

Ever since the true deputy of the spiritual *silsilah* of Hujjatullāh *Ḥadrat Shāh Walī-ullāh Dehlawī* assumed his deputyship, Allāh's ✽ invisible angels had made the announcement to the world and groups upon groups of students from all over India, Burma, Paurab, Bengal, Deccan, Sindh, Pacham, Punjab, Madras, Barār, Asia Minor, Kabul and Afghanistan started pouring into Gangoh. *Ḥadrat* had between fifteen and twenty, and sometimes up to seventy or eighty students every year.

The moment one group would complete and depart, another group would take its place. Those who departed would spread out to different parts of the world.

Imām Rabbānī's teaching started the moment he returned from Delhi as a newly qualified '*ālim*. His first student was Maulwī Sayyid Mu'min 'Alī *Sāhib*, to whom he taught *Sharḥ Jāmī*. From 1265 A.H. until 1314 A.H. — that is, for forty-nine years — he had students flocking to him from all over the world in order to study under his tutelage. It was also during this period that he decided to take up employment [for a short period, as previously mentioned], and had to endure the events which took place during the insurgency and the hardship of imprisonment. His *hajj* journeys were also undertaken during this period. All his striving in spiritual exercises, which had conveyed him to the high ranks of *Qutbīyyat* (being a *Qutb*), can also be included in this period. During this time, he had to endure the death of several of his friends and

relatives – one after the other. It was also during this phase of his life that he provided physical comfort and benefit to people through his medical treatment.

In a nutshell – people who possess a deep understanding of *Dīn* would appreciate that Allāh ﷻ had blessed Imām Rabbānī with a certain level of steadfastness so that he could fulfil the service for which he had been sent into this world. In every cell and in every hair on his body the qualities of 'quest for the truth' and 'being pleased with Divine Decree' could be found. Every single day of Imām Rabbānī's life was spent in obedience to the truth and in the rectification of the creation and so it was divided in an excellent and magnificent manner which was both unique and unparalleled.

His personal *islāh* (rectification and reformation) required a certain system and arrangement. It was fulfilled as follows:

- (1) He first studied Urdu and Persian, the method of performing *ṣalāh* and the primary principles of *Dīn* in his hometown.
- (2) He then had to leave his hometown and go to Delhi in order to acquire knowledge of the Sharī'ah.
- (3) Upon completion of his studies, he entered into marriage.
- (4) Together with this, he was blessed with the bounty of memorizing the Qur'ān.
- (5) The moment he had accomplished the outward rectification of his body and spirit and the other the necessities of life, he had to turn towards acquiring internal knowledge.
- (6) He went to Thānabhawan and pledged *bay'ah* and was blessed with the bounty of *nisbat* within a few days.

After traversing the different stages of *islāh-e-nafs*, the time had arrived for him to make the *islāh* of others and to guide the creation of Allāh ﷻ. Even in this regard, Allāh ﷻ ensured that he did this gradually and progressively. He commenced by treating physical ailments through Unanī medicine. Hindus, Muslims, disbelievers and believers, children, youths, males and females – everyone

benefitted from him. After a few years he gave up this occupation entirely and became fully engrossed in teaching the knowledge of the Sharī'ah. This sequence reached its peak when he taught the Aḥadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

He progressed to such a level in this regard that each year, after completing the *Daurah* of the Sihāh, the other sciences had to be overlooked – in fact, they were virtually non-existent. Finally the time had arrived for him to fulfil his actual purpose towards the 'creation' in this world – the core of the Sharī'ah – namely the teaching of *islāh-e-bātin* (internal rectification) and *sulūk*. The books were suddenly closed, and spiritual bestowals progressed at such a tremendous speed that – if we were to raise our eyes and look towards the four corners of the earth – we would in all probability not be exaggerating if we claim that he was matchless throughout the world. It was upon this 'pure essence' that his life came to an end and he was blessed with the honour of meeting his Merciful Creator. May Allāh ﷻ shower abundant Mercy upon him.

TEACHING AND DAURAH HADĪTH

A poet says:

*The one who watered of the university of knowledge,
the king of the pious,
was the full moon of the religion of the Arablan Prophet ﷺ
The court of the Hadīth of Nabī ﷺ
was presided by King Rashīd Aḥmad – the august and noble.*

The person who has inhaled the fragrant flowers and the aromatic blooms from the lush and vibrant garden of Muḥammad ﷺ and the green and flourishing orchard of Aḥmad ﷺ, will fully appreciate what a great bounty it is to teach the core and essence of the Sharī'ah and the sanctified and pure science of Hadīth. Add to this the fact that these Hadīth lessons [of Imām Rabbānī] were like a continuous rain in their general benefit and like the continuous

waves of the ocean in their fluency and flow.

Ask the fortunate students who had heard the sweet, melodious voice in that blossoming garden of Hadīth – and ask the privileged guests of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – who had had the honour of ‘eating’ the delicious bounties of the statements of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – regarding the atmosphere which pervaded the court of Quṭb Gangohī, and ask them what their hearts experienced by sitting in his Hadīth class. Ask them about its sweetness, over which they are shedding tears today and in search of which they are holding their lamps, yet finding nothing but despair and loss of hope.

Hadrat’s strength in *ijtihād*, his ability to extract rulings; his excellent correlation; sharp intellect; proficiency and equity; flowing and graceful explanations; sanctity and thoroughness – his memory, reliability; insight; forbearance; affection; kindness; humility and compassion – the way in which he gave attention to the poor and the patient and forbearing way in which he bore the audacity of his students – in short, every quality of his was like the flower of an ever-green tree and, as an Imām Bukhārī of his era, he was like an eternally-blossoming rose in his narration of Aḥadīth.

One of the special qualities which Hadrat possessed was that, whenever he narrated a Hadīth, a person would develop a yearning to practise upon it. This special spiritual effect showed that his narration of Aḥadīth was not merely from the book. Rather – it was as if a clear mirror had been placed before his pure heart onto which the illumination and lustre of Rasūlullāh ﷺ would fall and Hadrat would convey this reflection onto his students.

His teaching methods were utterly concentrated and the heart would unwittingly desire that the lesson should continue without end. Hadrat’s explanations used to be very simple and straightforward. This meant that even the ordinary layman [not students of Hadīth] could understand every word and the locks of the heart could be

opened, one by one. He used to provide detailed explanations regarding the *isnād* (chain of transmitters). Whenever contradictions appeared between Ahādīth, he would remove these contradictions with short, yet comprehensive correlations, leaving no room for the slightest doubt. It was a unique miracle of his that – whenever his students were faced with a lengthy explanation, or whenever an in-depth investigation had to be viewed – his lessons would appear to be very short, yet, upon counting the pages [of notes which had been covered], his students would be astounded at the unbelievable amount of work that had been explained in such a short time. After listening to his explanations, the marginal notes (*hawāshī*) in the text books would seem inconsequential. It seemed as if our Hadrat had been standing somewhere nearby [eavesdropping] while Rasūlullāh ﷺ, or one of his Sahābah رضي الله عنه, was explaining the Hadīth.

From among the Sihāh, Imām Rabbānī would generally commence with *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. He would present an analysis its pros and cons and deliver clear and lucid explanations to the students. He would translate and explain every Hadīth in simple, flowing words. He would expound on the essence of each Hadīth and lay it before them just as one would remove the outer covering of an item, or the peel of a fruit, in order to present its core. If there were any seeming contradictions between Ahādīth, or between the Qur'ān and a Hadīth, he would remove the contradiction and prove the correlation and agreement between them. He would mention the essential points on the science of *asmā'ar-rijāl* (biographies of the narrators), examine the reliability or weakness of the narrators and thereby provide the necessary evaluation of them. He would then explain the correlation between the Hadīth and the relevant chapter. If there was a subtle correlation between the text and context, he would explain it and demonstrate the correlation between one topic and the other. If a specific Hadīth contradicted a similar Hadīth in another collection of Ahādīth, he would draw a correlation between the two. He would also make reference to the principles of Ahādīth

and jurisprudence. He would draw the students' attention to complex issues and explain it several times.

Hadrat would never scowl or frown – not even if, after all of this, a student still asked him to repeat the explanation, posed unwarranted questions, or persisted unduly in his own error. On one occasion Hadrat was busy conducting a lesson when one of the students read the text and came to the word عطاره. The student who was reading, understood the meaning of this word and its root (عطر) and thus continued reading without pausing. A foreign student who was sitting in the front, did not understand this word. He jabbed the reader forcefully and said: "Stop! I did not understand." He then addressed Hadrat saying: "What is the meaning of عطاره?" Hadrat replied: "*Zaujah 'itr faraushandah* (the wife of a person who sells perfume)." The moment Hadrat provided this meaning, the reader resumed his reading. The poor foreigner still did not understand. He jabbed the reader a second time and said to Hadrat: "Maulānā, I did not understand the meaning of عطاره." Hadrat said: "*'Itr faraush kī bīwī* (the wife of a person who sells perfume. A perfumer's wife)." The reader resumed reading once again. The foreigner jabbed him a third time, glared at him and said: "Stop! I did not understand the meaning of عطاره." This time Hadrat replied with a raised voice: "*'Itr bechne wālā kā joro* (the spouse of a person who sells perfume)." Finally the foreigner was satisfied and said: "Yes! Now I understood. Yes bhāi, you may continue reading."

The other books of the Sihāh used to commence upon the completion of *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. When teaching these books, Hadrat would not translate the Ahādīth. Only the new Ahādīth [those that are not found in *Tirmidhī Sharīf*] or the statements of the compiler would be explained as described previously. The mere reading of the remaining Ahādīth would suffice.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to remain in *wudū'* at all times, but he

was especially particular about it when teaching Hadīth. From beginning to end, he would not permit a single letter to be taught without *wuḍū'*. He would constantly emphasize – both explicitly and implicitly – that his students should remain in *wuḍū'*. Furthermore, he always had a pleasant and smiling demeanour and would treat every person in a simple, informal manner. However, when teaching his students, he would become even more informal and easy-going so that none of them would find it difficult to express any doubt or ask any question. When the students became tired after a lengthy period of lessons, he would relate an anecdote or a joke to them which would make them smile. At times they would be unable to control themselves and laugh so much that their stomachs would ache from laughter. This casual approach would revive their hearts and instil new blood in their veins so that they could continue with their lesson. Thus he would return to the original topic of discussion, and they would return to their original condition [of respectful focus].

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had the unique ability to reduce others to uncontrollable laughter without even displaying a smile on his face. Relating a humorous anecdote in such a simple, straight-faced manner would, in itself, cause the listeners to laugh. However, at the same time he possessed the ability to quickly get his students to sit up respectfully once again. His humour in front of his students never caused any of them to lose the natural respect and awe which they had for him – which are essential for their well-being and academic blessing.

On one occasion he noticed that his students were fatigued, so he related the following story to them in order to divert their hearts and refresh their minds. He said: "Miyā, I want to relate to you a story which occurred when I was studying in Delhi. A Sikh had a water-skin on his back. He had a tin bowl in his hand with which he was making a noise in order to draw the attention of the people. All the while he was calling: '*Sabīl*, I have *sabīl*' (cool water)." A person

would come to him, drink the cool water which he offered and proceed. There was a poor villager who had been listening to this announcement for quite some time. He was baffled and thought to himself: 'I have eaten so many different and delicious types of food in Delhi, but I do not know what this *sabīl* is and how it tastes. Let me go and drink it as well.' He went to the Sikh and asked him to give him some *sabīl* as well. The Sikh opened the mouth of the water-skin and the villager started drinking gulp after gulp. Coincidentally, a ball of dung [like the round droppings excreted by sheep and goats] which had fallen into the water, also entered his mouth. He chewed it and swallowed it [without knowing what it was]. When he finished drinking, he looked up at the Sikh and said: 'You were making so much noise [when advertising your drink] that I could not hear anything else. Yet, when I came to drink, just one *sabīl* came into my mouth!'"

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's lessons were unique. He would always speak on the level of his students and consider the capability and understanding of each student. Compared to other teachers of that era, his matchless lessons were without a doubt the most beneficial and helpful to the students. He would untie difficult knots and solve complicated text with ease and would explain them in uncomplicated words. He would derive and extract rulings from the Hadīth, explain the opinions of the other *madhāhib* in sufficient detail and then explain the reasons for the preference of the opinion of Imām A'zam Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*. He would explain this with ample and convincing proof and make the issue as bright and clear as the sun at midday.

Hadrat would repeatedly say to his students: "I have a special love for the Hanafī *madh-hab* and absolute confidence in its correctness." At the same time, when displaying the pre-eminence of the *madh-hab*, he would never, ever ridicule the other *madhāhib* or the imāms of the other *madhāhib*. If he found any student inclining to such thoughts, he would rectify him immediately – both

with words and actions. In fact, he disliked crossing the boundary of fanaticism (*ta'assub*) on the issue of *taqlīd*. In their extreme fanaticism, some students used to harbour ill thoughts about certain scholars of Hadīth (*Muḥaddithūn*). Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would immediately change the direction of his lesson and change his manner of expression. If he heard any student making any statement of objection or saying any word of ridicule against any scholar of Hadīth, his dislike for this would clearly be seen on his face. Then, during the course of the lesson, instead of giving preference to the Hanafī madh-hab, he would enumerate the points of preference in favour of the other *madhāhib* – for example, the opinions of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*. He would do this purposefully so that his students could develop good thoughts about the *Muḥaddithīn*. The moment he developed this in them, he would return to displaying the pre-eminence of the Hanafī madh-hab.

Hadrat had an excellent memory. If a Hadīth in one book contradicted a Hadīth from another book, or displayed a similarity to it, he would immediately provide the references for that Hadīth and, at times, he would even provide the page numbers. One of his students, Hāfiz Maḥmūd Husayn Sāhib Barelwī relates: “I had studied for quite some time under Hadrat. After obtaining his permission, I went for hajj. When I reached Makkah Mu’azzamah, and due to my love for academic work, I attended the lessons of Maulānā Maulwī ‘Abd al-Haqq Sāhib Ilāhābādī Muḥājir. I read the first volume of *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. For many years, Maulānā Ilāhābādī had been in the habit of reading books and while he was in Makkah Mu’azzamah, he had even more time to occupy himself in this. He was considered to be a well-read Muḥaddith. One day, I was reading ‘the chapter on reciting Sūrah al- Fātiḥah behind the imām’ to him. While I was reading this, I mentioned to him – quite by the way – that there is a *mauqūf* Hadīth of Hadrat Jābir ؓ in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* which states that it is essential to read Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in every *rak’at* إلا أن يكون وراء الإمام – unless the person is performing *ṣalāh* as a follower (*muqtaḍī*) of the imām. I also told him that I had

heard Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib say: 'Although this Hadīth is *mauqūf* of Hadrat Jābir رضي الله عنه, it falls under the category of a *marfū* Hadīth, because, when it comes to rulings, a Sahābī cannot make an exception (*istithnā*) of his own accord.' Upon hearing this explanation, Maulānā 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib sat up immediately and said with great enthusiasm and insistence: 'When you return to India, you must definitely ask Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad for the reference of his Hadīth and you must write it to me stating where, and on what page it is recorded.' When I returned and went to Gangoh, I asked Hadrat for the reference of this Hadīth, wrote down the page and line number and, in 1304 A.H., I sent it to Maulānā 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib"

None but the students of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī could ever fully describe the nature of his lessons. His unique investigation and analysis of every word completely enamoured his students. He was everything, yet he considered himself to be nothing. One day, his students were completely overcome and overawed by his excellent lesson and they started speaking in praise of his in-depth knowledge in his presence. He spontaneously took an oath and said: "Let alone thinking I am better than you – I do not even consider myself equal to any one of you!" Just look at the manner in which he reduced himself! He was never in the habit of taking an oath – yet, on this occasion, he was completely overcome and could not prevent himself from blurting out an oath.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was always concerned about correcting the beliefs and actions of his students, but showed particular attention in this regard while conducting his lessons. He would constantly refute *shirk* (polytheism) and *bid'ah* (innovation) and encourage *tauhīd*, and he would emphasise the importance of following the Sunnah at every juncture. He would never suffice with mere verbal advice. If there was a need for it, or the occasion demanded it, he would become stern and promptly enjoin good and forbid evil. Together with this, he would remove the darkness from dark hearts

through his spiritual bestowal and attention and polish the hearts which had become encrusted with rust. There were times when the circle of students would feel overwhelmed and the entire assembly would be able to feel the descent of *sakīnah* (peace and tranquillity).

He would explain the nature of *ma'rifat* and *haqīqat* in the context of the sciences of the Sharī'ah, thereby instilling in the hearts of the students the yearning to acquire *sulūk* and *tarīqah*. Some students would experience *wajd* (ecstasy) during the lessons itself and their hearts would be overwhelmed by emotion.

Maulānā Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī had pledged *bay'ah* to Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī] and was sent by him to Gangoh to study under Hadrat's tutelage. He also studied the spiritual sciences under him and would engage in *dhikr* and other devotional practices. He was, by nature, *maghlūb al-hāl* (one who is overcome by emotions) and used to experience states of ecstasy quite often. There were times when he would burst out crying. They [the class, together with Hadrat] came to a Hadīth which stated that once, Rasūlullāh ﷺ ascended the pulpit, commenced his sermon and started swaying from side to side, causing the people to fear that he might fall down. Upon reading this, Maulwī Muḥammad Raushan Khān Sāhib said: "Hadrat, *hāl* (being overcome by one's emotions) is established from this Hadīth and we learn of *wajd* from this Hadīth." Imām Rabbānī smiled and said: "*Jī hā*" (yes), and started teaching something else.

In addition to *Daurah Hadīth*, Hadrat also taught *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *usūl al-fiqh* and *usūl al-Hadīth*. However, towards the end he confined himself to teaching Hadīth only, due to of his natural affinity for it. At the beginning [of his career] he used to teach all the religious sciences with great enthusiasm. Maulwī Maḥmūd Husayn Sāhib Barelwī relates: "Maulwī Qādir 'Alī Sāhib was an elderly teacher who had taught at our *madrasah*, Misbāh al-'Ulūm, for about thirty

years. He used to say: 'Many years ago I studied volume two of *Hidāyah* under Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib. Hadrat used to tell us that it was the fourteenth time that he was teaching *Hidāyah*.'"

What can be said about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's in-depth juristic acumen – bearing in mind the fact that he had taught the detailed books of the famous jurists between fifteen and twenty times? His Allāh-endowed insight on the subject of jurisprudence, and his innate ability to extract and derive rulings, can be equated to the effect which polish would have on gold. Towards the latter part of his life he restricted himself to teaching Hadīth, but – as is expected of the *qutb* of India, the *mujaddid* (reviver) of his time, the Shaykh of the era and the crown of the '*ulamā*' – he continued issuing *fatāwā* throughout and he fulfilled that duty with the same zeal, even after he had lost his eyesight.

During his student days, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had studied all the rational sciences which were in vogue – that is, logic, philosophy, ethics, theology, mathematics, astronomy and so forth. He completed the entire *Nizāmī* syllabus – and a bit more than that – in a most excellent manner and attained the top position in his class. However, during his teaching career, he left all rational sciences aside and confined himself to teaching religious sciences only. In fact, he considered philosophy and similar subjects to be impermissible because he found them to be in contradiction of the Sharī'ah. There was no limit to the manner in which he used to create an aversion towards it.

One day a student said to him: "Hadrat, we do not believe in the philosophical teachings. We merely study and teach them verbally. What is wrong with that?" Hadrat replied: "Firstly, the fact that you utter words of *kufir* and *shirk*, then continue to validate your statement by establishing proof thereof, and then defend it against the objections which are levelled against it is, in essence, proof that

you believe in them. Even if we were to assume that we do not believe in them, they are still *harām* and warrant the Wrath of Allāh ﷻ. For example: If someone calls you a donkey or a pig, or utters vulgar words against you, it is obvious that he does not believe you to be a donkey or a pig, or whatever other vulgar term he may have called you. He is only uttering these words with his tongue. But tell me – Will you become angry with him or not? You will certainly become angry with him! Now consider the words of *kufir* and *shirk* in the same light – they will certainly earn Allāh's Anger. This is because Allāh ﷻ has more Self-Respect than the most bashful and modest Muslim."

The student had no answer, so he said: "Hadrat, what can we do? We are compelled to study it. We cannot get a job without it!" Hadrat replied: "If someone were to offer you one hundred rupees a month for carrying a heap of excreta from one end of the marketplace to the other, will your self-respect allow you to do this? Tell me honestly. It will never allow you to accept this job. How sad! You do not experience any shame in hurling abuses and vulgar words at Allāh ﷻ, yet you feel ashamed of doing something which is permissible!" The student had no answer and, neither he nor the other students had the desire or courage to seek permission to study such despicable sciences.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's classes generally commenced at about 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. and would end at about 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. The same *kitāb* would then again be taught between *zuhr* and '*asr*'. If there were only a few students or a small group of students during a particular year, he would conduct his classes in his room. If there were a large number of students, his classes would be conducted in the Musjid. During the summer months – after *zuhr* – Hadrat would sit next to the *mihrāb* of the outer section of the Musjid while the students would form a circle in the courtyard. During the winter months, he would do the same in the mornings. Sometimes, as the time of '*asr*' approached, the people who lived nearby would attend

his classes and the inside section of the Musjid would be filled. If anyone from these general masses did not understand his discussion, and posed a question while the lesson was in process, Hadrat would not brush him aside. Instead, if the subject was related to something which could be understood by him, he would explain it in very simple terms and satisfy the questioner in this way.

Students came from different regions and thus spoke different languages and dialects. They would speak Paurabī, Bengali, Hindi, Kabulī, Persian, Punjabi and so forth. According to their intellect and mental capacity, they would ask all types of questions – both good and not so good. Regardless, Hadrat would respond to every single student in a very kind and affectionate way, provide each one with a convincing answer and in this way he would reassure them all. Together with this, he would constantly monitor the way in which his students sat, how they walked, their movements, their pace, their demeanour, their dress and their appearance – in short, he would monitor every outward, external condition. He would ensure that none of this was against the Sharī'ah. If he found any student to be undesirous of putting into practice what he had learnt, he would show concern for his rectification both verbally and with his heart. He would do this implicitly, but also explicitly, by creating a yearning in him or issuing a warning to him. He would do this in a gentle manner, in a harsh tone, or whatever method he found to be applicable. Hadrat would remain restless until the student adhered strictly to the Sharī'ah.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to be very particular about the capability and competence of the new students who arrived. If he found any waywardness in a student, or if he had an intuitive feeling that the student would go astray, or lead others astray after he qualifies, he would not even commence teaching him. Instead, he would defer him in a very subtle way or create obstacles in his path which would cause him to lose hope and depart of his own

accord. However, he would treat those students in whom he recognized a sincere quest, competence and good fortune, like a close relative or an obedient son. He would give him his books, show him to his room or provide alternative accommodation for him and make arrangements for his meals. He would continue seeing to his needs and inquiring about him as long as he remained his student. Periodically, he would ask every student whether he was encountering any problems. If a student had any need, he would fulfil it for him. If he was grieved or worried, he would console him and guide him towards patience. He paid particular attention to looking after his students, honouring them and showing hospitality towards them.

Hadrat desired that everyone else should accord respect to these guests of Rasūlullāh ﷺ [his students] in the same manner in which he showed affection towards them. He would never tolerate anyone looking down upon any of the students or sending left-over, unwanted food to them. On one occasion he saw a student carrying a *rotī* which was not wrapped [but given bare and open]. He called the student and asked him: "Who has been appointed to provide food to you?" The student mentioned the name of one of Hadrat's relatives. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "Very well, you must not go there anymore. From now on your food will come from my house." At the same time, he sent a message to his relative's house expressing his dissatisfaction. He said: "How sad! This poor student who has come to study *Dīn* and is dependent on your *rotīs* is treated like a beggar at your door!

*The Kingdom of Allāh ﷻ is not restricted,
and the feet of the pious person are not amputated.
(He can traverse the world to seek his provisions.)*

You may keep your *rotīs*. Allāh ﷻ has made other arrangements for him."

The pure and chaste woman came to Hadrat, expressed her sincere regret, and asked him to forgive her. She said: "Hadrat, this will never happen again. You will see! I will provide the students with their food on the *dastarkhwān* (table-mat) with absolute respect." Hadrat accepted her apology and informed the student to continue collecting his food from its usual source.

SEH DARĪ

Within a few years, the 'court' of Shaykh-e-Waqt, Bukhārī-e-Zamānah, Abū Hanīfah-e-'Asr Imām Rabbānī enjoyed tremendous popularity. Students started pouring into his classes in large numbers. His room was not big enough to accommodate so many students, listeners and attendees. It was also not possible for them to sit in the Musjid where the sun would beat down on them during the hot summers and the wind would cut through them during the cold winters. Many 'thirsty' visitors would come, find no place to sit, and go away — deprived. His *khādims* found it difficult to move about and insisted that he should do something in this regard. The thought crossed Hadrat's mind that he should make some extensions in front of his room. A collection was made from some of his sincere and devoted friends²⁹ according to what they could afford and, from his side, he contributed between thirty and fifty rupees. With this money a simple *seh darī* was built in front of his room.

When one studies Hadrat's biography, it seems as though the large number of students only started pouring in after 1300 A.H. — that is, after his third hajj. However, this *seh darī* was constructed about

²⁹ Qāḍī Amānat 'Alī Lucknāuwī's daughter passed away around that time and he gave her jewellery to Hadrat and asked him to spend it on a good cause. The money obtained from this jewellery was used for the construction of the *seh darī*. The outstanding amount was obtained from other people.

twenty years prior to that. It thus does not seem correct to assume that the *seh darī* was constructed because of the large number of students. In all likelihood there was another reason for its construction. The accommodation of the students could probably also have been a consideration when the decision was made to construct it. Regardless, the *seh darī* was constructed for a *Dīnī* purpose and the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ was the actual basis for its construction. Consequently, Allāh ﷻ blessed it and the construction of the *seh darī* – which ought to be referred to as the veranda and raised courtyard of *Hujrah Quddūsīyyah* [the room of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*] – was completed. It was ten yards long and four yards wide.

Without a doubt, *Hadrat* was always dearly loved by the members of his tribe. Outsiders – especially those who had a love for *Dīn* and those who had an affinity for knowledge – considered him to be Shaykh-e-Zamānah (the Shaykh of the era) from the very beginning. But – if Rasūlullāh ﷺ was not appreciated in his hometown [Makkah], how could the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Muḥaddith Gangohī, be appreciated in his hometown? This was especially the case among those members who considered themselves to be descendants of the Quddūsī *khānqāh*. They did not consider this Allāh-bestowed bounty to be a bounty.

There is a famous saying: "*The fowl of the house is considered to be as insignificant as dhal.*" This saying could certainly be applied to them. How could they have appreciated this pearl which had fallen freely into their hands and for which they did not have to endure any difficulty? To aggravate matters – due to the fact that *Hadrat* opposed the incorrect and baseless beliefs of the *pīr zādagī*, they considered him to be their enemy and viewed him as someone who wanted to cause them harm. They would look for every opportunity to try to catch him out on any statement which he made and were constantly on the look out for an opportunity to accuse him. Several years had passed in this way, yet they could not find

any reason to point a finger at him. Thus, they resorted to the issue of the *seh darī* and started to exaggerate and magnify the entire affair, blowing it completely out of proportion. They established committees, held meetings, gathered in their lounges to discuss the issue, and finally made the announcement: "Today, Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad constructed a *seh darī*. Tomorrow he will construct something else and lay claim to its ownership. Let's oust him from this house, pay him for whatever he had spent on it, and free him of control over it." Thereafter, a large group of them went to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and informed him of their intention.

The Allāh-bestowed awe which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's mere presence commanded would not permit them to confront him in small numbers – especially not on the matter of the *seh darī*, which even they considered to be important. In fact, they did not have the courage to confront him with anything that might be against his wishes. They imagined the possibility of an ensuing battle against a large group of students, or that they might even have to wage war against them. As is the norm in this world, they thought that it would be very difficult to take control over it. They imagined that they would have to oppose Maulānā, that a fight would erupt, that some people would be killed – and Allāh ﷻ Alone knew what else could happen. They therefore descended upon him in droves, one group followed by another.

Hadrat Maulānā did not have the slightest inkling as to why such a large group of people would take the pains of coming to see him – and for what purpose? Eventually, one 'brave-hearted' fellow stepped forward and said: "Maulwī Sāhib, it is the wish of all these people present that you should vacate this place. They will reimburse you for whatever expenses you have incurred in the process of its construction." Hadrat finally realized why they had come. He replied in a very simple and humble tone: "Very well. Why did such a large number of people have to come for such a trivial matter? Even if you had sent the lowest from amongst you,

or simply sent a message with your *dhobi* (washer-man), I would not have hesitated in the least in vacating." Saying this, he took thirty to forty rupees from them to cover the amount which he had spent out of his own pocket. As for the funds which he had collected from others as contributions towards the construction ... he did not take any of it. He immediately issued the following instruction to the students: "Remove all the bedding, clothing, study material, books and so forth, and vacate all the rooms."

There was a time when washer-men used this sanctified *khānqāh* to tie up their donkeys and horses. At that time, not a single person from amongst the progeny of the Shaykh ['Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī] ever felt any pain in his heart [at the deplorable condition of the *khānqāh*]. But today – when the glittering sounds of *qālallāh wa qālar rasūl* [the words of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ] were being uttered, taught and studied here, and an 'orchard' of 'fragrant trees' stood planted here, they thought of taking ownership of the place. Not only Hadrat, but even these *pīr zāda* (progeny of the Shaykh) must have fully remembered the time when Hadrat personally cleaned the place and used hoes and spades to remove the dirt and manure which had accumulated there.

However, this was also a test from Allāh ﷻ, the fruit of which were to be reaped very quickly – both in this world and in the Hereafter. After having lived there for so long, Hadrat's natural attachment to this place obviously caused him to feel dejected. It was as if someone had stolen his life and property. In spite of this, he did not falter or waver in the least in this test. He vacated the place and shifted somewhere else. Tears certainly flowed from his eyes, sadness and dejection certainly covered his face, but he did not utter a single word of complaint. He held his walking stick in his hand, stood up immediately and proceeded towards the Musjid.

When the *pīr zāda* had treated him in this ungrateful way, an entire group of foreign students from Kabul and Afghanistan, as well as

some local students were present. These students were not just ordinary students – they were totally devoted to Hadrat. They would have been proud to shed their blood instead of allowing a single bead of perspiration to fall from Hadrat's body. But, look at Hadrat's magnanimity! He did not even want to delay a single day in vacating this place which he had inhabited for so many years. He immediately transferred his clothing, books, and other personal items to his house. He rolled up his bedding and straw mats and placed it upright in one corner of the Musjid. With a *tasbīh* in one hand and his walking stick in the other, he proceeded to the Musjid and sat down facing the *qiblah*. He had emptied his room completely and now he inhabited the House of Allāh ﷻ.

There is no need for us to describe the distress, frustration and rage of his relatives and loyal students. Every person can deduce that they were agitated and angry. Blood flowed from their eyes and they would easily have sacrificed themselves and given their lives for their Hadrat. How can we describe Hadrat's fortitude and steadfastness during this time of great tribulation? Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not permit anyone of them to utter a single word. He told them: "Anyone who utters a single word is not my friend but my enemy. You may leave and carry on with your work."

The area in which Hadrat's grave and *khānqāh* are currently situated is well-known as Sarā'e.³⁰ There was a lake between Sarā'e

³⁰ Gangoh was divided into two sections. The eastern section (which was the old section) was referred to as the town and the western section was known as Sarā'e. The eastern section still exists since the era of Shahāb ad-Dīn Ghaurī. The Anṣār arrived in that area during his era. All the *Shaykhī zāde* (progeny of the Shaykh) who are living there are Ayyūbī Anṣār [from the progeny of Hadrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī ﷺ]. According to some records, they arrived there from Herat. There is a grave there which is popularly known as the grave of Muḥammad Ghaurī and the area in which it is situated is also known as Muḥammad Ghaurī. The history of the western section, that is Sarā'e, commences with the arrival of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs

and the town itself. This lake completely separated Sarā'e from the town. When the residents of the town heard about the incident, Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib, his younger brother – Munshī Fahīm ad-Dīn, Hadrat's brother-in-law – Ghulām Dāmin 'Alī Sāhib, Shaykh Walī Muḥammad Sāhib, and a few others felt very disturbed and rushed to go to Hadrat. This was the scene which they witnessed: They found him sitting in the Musjid. His rolled bedding, straw mats and his walking stick had all been placed in one corner. There was a *tasbīh* in his hand and he was looking sad, but he was engaged in the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ. A few grief-stricken students were sitting around, here and there. A deathly silence had encompassed Hadrat's empty room and the adjoining rooms.

Upon their arrival, the group offered *salām*, sat down and expressed the following sentiments: "O our *Dīnī* master and king! The people of Sarā'e did not recognize your value. It is to their detriment. We request that you consider honouring us worthless people by coming with us into the town. You may live in any of the houses and rooms you like. We cannot express our devotion to you, but we certainly know that when the people of Makkah banished the Final Messenger ﷺ, Allāh ﷻ honoured the people of Madīnah by enabling them to host Rasūlullāh ﷺ and blessed them with the opportunity of helping him. This incident is also an example for the true deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and an intrinsic element of deputyship. We will consider it most fortunate if you would accept this request and wish of ours."

Imām Rabbānī expressed his gratitude for their concern, made *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to bless them in their lives and in their wealth, but

rahimahullāh when he arrived and inhabited this jungle which was on the outskirts of Gangoh. The Shaykh passed away in 944 A.H. and his stay in Gangoh – according to different narrations – lasted for 12, 14, or 16 years. We could thus conclude that 928 A.H. could be the earliest time when the Sarā'e section was inhabited.

did not accede to their request. He said to them: "I am very comfortable here. This servant of Allāh ﷺ will remain in the House of Allāh ﷻ – where no one can remove or expel him." After saying this, he gave them permission to leave.

The *pīr zāde* of Sarā'e soon realized the superiority of his actions when they considered how he quickly, unhesitatingly and unexpectedly emptied the room and the *seh darī*. They regretted and lamented their abhorrent and impolite action. When they came to their senses, they started accusing each other of instigating the others into committing such a disrespectful and audacious act. They felt remorseful over the desolation of their great forefather's room and the desertion of his simple cottage. They realised that their actions had caused *Dīnī* lessons and teaching to come to an end and that they had caused all that is good and blessed to cease. In short, they were extremely remorseful and penitent. Consequently they called another meeting, consulted each other, went to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī for a second time and apologized for their audacity. They asked forgiveness for their mistake and requested him to inhabit the room once again.

This scene occurred after Hadrat had been living in the Musjid for a few days. He refused to leave the Musjid and return to the room. However, when these people insisted beyond limit and the old, grey-haired elders expressed their desire for him to return, he acceded to their wish and re-illuminated the room with his presence.

One of Hadrat's merits was displayed when he vacated the room. Another one of his merits was displayed when he forgave them their mistake and returned to the room to which he had become attached. Ever since that day, no one ever mentioned anything about possession or ownership of the place again. Hadrat remained in it right until the final hour of his life. This was the same *seh darī* where, on the western side, his bed was laid while he was happily

making preparations for his lengthy journey to the Hereafter and where, throughout his condition and in his enthusiasm to meet Allāh ﷻ, he was making the following *du'ā'*: اللهم بالرفيق الأعلى (O Allāh! I desire Your Highest Companionship.) After returning to his room, Hadrat said: "My actions went to waste and I received those rupees from them."³¹

Imām Rabbānī continued teaching until his eyesight became very weak and he eventually lost his vision completely. The last year in which he taught was the year 1313 A.H. (1895 C.E.) Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhelwī [the father of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā *rahimahullāh*] was one of the students in his class during his final year of teaching. This *daurah* (final year of the 'ālim course) continued despite the fact

³¹ Shāhji Muhammad Husayn Sāhib – known as the senior *sajjādah* – had a special relationship and bond with Hadrat for a long time. He never opposed him in any way. Instead, he was always there to help and support him. The junior *sajjādah*, the father of Makhdūm Jahān Fakhr Jahān Mumtāz Jahān, was older than Hadrat and was his paternal uncle. They both held an arbitration council with some of the *pīr zāde* and ruled that Hadrat should accept the money which he had spent in the construction of the *seh darī* and live in the room as before. The latter *sajjādah* presented fifty rupees to Hadrat. Hadrat accepted the money without hesitation and said later on: "If Allāh ﷻ gives, why should a servant not accept?" This incident took place after the first *hajj* which he had performed in 1279 A.H. There were no disputes about the *seh darī* after this. However, the *pīr zāde* wanted to show that they were the owners of the place. So, whenever they held an 'urs, they would host the musicians in the *seh darī* and tie their horses near the wild fig tree which, in those days, was a small plant. Even on these occasion, Hadrat did not dispute with them. He went to his own house and remained there for as long as the musicians, singers and their horses occupied the *seh darī* and the area around it. Hadrat would only leave his house for *salāh* and return home immediately thereafter. Eventually, this practice also disappeared completely and there were no future disputes or conflicts with regard to Hadrat's accommodation. (Hāfiz Muḥammad Ya'qūb ... Hadrat's grandson.)

that Hadrat's eyesight was becoming weaker and weaker by the day. In fact, the pace was accelerated so that the lessons could be completed quickly. Eventually, during that same year, hydrocele (a sickness causing continuous watering of the eyes which results in cataracts) covered his eyes and he lost his vision completely. Consequently, he concentrated solely on spiritual rectification and training.

Over three hundred students completed their Hadīth studies under his tutelage. Upon completion, they scattered into different parts of the world in order to convey and teach whatever they had learnt. *Al-hamdulillāh*, many of them are still alive [at the time of writing this book] and are fully occupied in teaching. Many of them have passed away and many others have become engrossed in other work and, in so doing, they have faded into obscurity to such an extent that people would find it hard to believe that they had also enjoyed the honour of being students of Hadrat Muhaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.

Upon completion of their studies and *daurāh*, Hadrat would – as per the original *masnūn* method – grant the students verbal permission to relate Ahadīth. If any of the students requested written permission, he would provide it to them. As per the practice of the academic chain (*silsilah 'ilmīyyah*) of Hujjatullāh [Shāh Walī-ullāh] Dehlawī – if any of the students or '*ulamā*' sought his permission for an entire book, or part thereof – even if they did not read it to him or hear it from him – he would not refuse. There was an occasion during which Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] had sought his permission for *Hadīth al-Jinn* (a Hadīth which was narrated by a jinn). Hadrat immediately wrote down the Hadīth, together with its *sanad* (chain of transmitters), – and gave his permission to Maulānā. He also gave permission for that same Hadīth to some other '*ulamā*' who did not ask for it, but desired it. Other '*ulamā*', whom he felt may desire it later on, also received his permission for that Hadīth. I consider it

appropriate to quote this 'gift' exactly as it had been written:

"Maulwī Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib – as-salāmu 'alaykum – I received your letter. I am quoting the sanad of the Ḥadīth:

حدثني شيخى الشاه أحمد سعيد المجددي قال حدثني أبى الشاه أبو سعيد المجددي قال
حدثني شيخ الشيوخ الشاه عبد العزيز الدهلوي قال حدثني عمى الشاه أهل الله
الدهلوي عن القاضي الجنى المعمر قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من
قُبَلِ فِي غَيْرِ زِيَةِ ثَمَّةٍ مَنَرٍ.

Translation: "My Shaykh, Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd al-Mujaddidī said: My father Shāh Abū Sa'īd al-Mujaddidī said: The Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz ad-Dehlawī said: My uncle Shāh Ahlullāh³² ad-Dehlawī

³² Shāh Ahlullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was sitting in a Musjid and reciting the Qur'ān when a small snake passed by. He took a pair of shears or some other object and cut it in two. A short while later, two messengers came to him and said: "The king is calling you." Shāh Sāhib accompanied them and they took him out of the town towards the jungle. Shāh Sāhib became worried and asked: "Where is the king?" They replied: "He is near here." Shāh Sāhib thought to himself that the king must have come out here to hunt and needed to find out a ruling (*mas'ala*) and that that was why he had summoned me there. Thus, he continued walking without any worry. They continued until they came to a door in the ground which he had to enter. Upon entering it, he saw a royal court in attendance. An old man was sitting on a throne. His attendants were sitting in a circle and a court case was in progress.

Shāh Sāhib offered *salām* and sat down to one side. That was the court of a jinnī king. A short while later, the king looked towards Shāh Sāhib and a claimant was summoned. He claimed that Shāh Sāhib had killed his son without any justification and – as per the Sharī'ah of Muhammad ﷺ – he had to be given the right of retribution. Shāh Sāhib was astounded by this claim and expressed his total ignorance regarding any murder or killing.

However, he was informed that the small snake which he had chopped while he was reciting the Qur'ān had been the claimant's son. Since Shāh Sāhib had killed his son without any justification, he demanded

related from the old jinnī judge, who had said: I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: 'The person who is killed while he has adopted a different form [or appearance], has shed his blood in vain.'"

Before I conclude this section, I would like to quote thirty questions and intricate points related to the Qur'ān and Hadīth, together with its answers and explanations, which would serve as an example of the beautiful garden from which Hadrat's fortunate students had the opportunity to fill their hearts. Before I start, I would like to conclude with an example of the written permission which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to give to some of the students – according to their capability and level of competence. It used to be stamped [with his personal stamp] and signed by him personally. Present day students refer to this *ijāzat-e-riwāyat* (permission to narrate) as a *sanad*. They generally receive it from their *madrasah* and teachers at the time of qualification. The simple words of this *sanad*

retribution. Shāh Sāhib admitted what he had done and remained silent. To cut a long story short ... since he was guilty, the verdict for his death was about to be passed. There was an elderly person in the royal court. He had accepted Rasūlullāh ﷺ as a Prophet and had the opportunity of meeting him. He thus had the honour of being a jinnī Ṣahābī. He said: "Retribution is not *wājib* on Shāh Sāhib because I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say: 'The person who has been killed in any other appearance (form) than his own, then his blood [has been shed] in vain.'"

This Hadīth would mean: The jinn's child was in the form of a small snake. The person who kills it – thinking it to be a snake – will not be held accountable.

Consequently, the royal verdict was passed. Shāh Sāhib was released and honourably escorted to his place. While there, Shāh Sāhib shook hands and embraced the jinnī Ṣahābī and obtained formal permission from him to relate this Hadīth. Based upon this contact which he had with this jinnī Ṣahābī, Shāh Sāhib is may be considered among the *Tābi'īn*. This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows on whomever He Wills.

and its concise and brief content, offers an indication of his sincerity. It is on account of this same sincerity that Gangoh managed to remain the garden of *Shar'ī* sciences and an orchard of the Sunnah for many years.

The following permission was given to Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muḥammad Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī. *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī had written it with his own pen and blessed hand:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم-الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة والسلام على سيد الأنبي والمرسلين سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وأتباعه أجمعين إلى يوم الدين وبعد، فيقول
الراجي إلى رحمة ربه الصمد أضعف عباد الله المشتبه برشيد أحمد الجنجوهي مولداً ومسكناً والأنصاري والحلفي نسباً ومشرّباً أن الأخ الأعز في الدين المولوي محمد روشن خان بن محمد أمير خان المرادآبادي قد قرأ عليّ الأمهات الست المشهورة في الحديث كملاً وبعض الموطأ للإمام مالك بن أنس وعشرين جزءاً من تفسير الجلالين رضي الله تعالى عنهم أجمعين وتفهم كما ينبغي له وأنا أجزته أن يروي عني جميع ما قرأ عندي بتدبر وتيقظ فيه وأوصيه بتقوى الله والمحافظة على حدوده واتباع سنة رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم وإقتفاء عهده وأن لا يسيء الظن بجناب أئمة الدين والفقهاء المجتهدين وأن لا يصاحب ولا يجالس السفهاء وأهل الأهواء ويذب ما استطاع عن الراسخين من العلماء وأن يلزم عليه اشتغال علم الدين ودراسته ويجتنب عما لا يعنيه فلم يرم درايته وأن يجعل العلم وسيلة لنيل رضا الله تعالى ولقائه ولا ينساني من صالح الإستغفار وخير دعائه وأسأل الله تعالى أن يوفقنا لما يحب ويرضى ويجعل آخرته خيراً من الدنيا والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله تعالى على خير خلقه سيدنا محمد وآله وأصحابه وأتباعه أجمعين ط المرقوم يوم السبت سابع جمادى الأولى من سنة ألف ومائتين واثنين وتسعين من هجرة سيد النبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقط كتبه بقلمه العبد رشيد أحمد كنكوهي عفى عنه سنة ١٢٩٢ هجري.

Translation: Commencing in the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the universe. Salutations and peace upon the leader of the Prophets and Messengers, our master, Muḥammad, his family, his Companions and all his followers until the Day of Recompense.

The one who is hopeful of the Mercy of his Self-Sufficient

Lord and the weakest of Allāh's servants, who is known as Rashīd Aḥmad, a Gangohī by birth and residence, an Ansārī and Hanafī by lineage and affiliation, states:

The honourable brother in religion, Maulwī Muḥammad Raushan Khān ibn Muḥammad Amīr Khān al-Murādābādī has read the six famous compilations of Aḥadīth in their entirety before me, parts of al-Muwattā of Imām Mālik ibn Anas and twenty parts of Tafsīr al-Jalālayn. May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with all the compilers. He has understood the content as was required of him, and I permit him to narrate everything which he has read before me with full concentration and reflection. I advise him to fear Allāh, to uphold His Limits, to emulate the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and to uphold His covenants. I advise him not to have any bad thoughts about any of the imāms of Dīn and mujtahid jurists. I advise him not to remain in the company of, or sit with foolish people, nor those who follow their own whims. He must come to the defence of the erudite 'ulamā' as much as he can. He must fully occupy himself in the acquisition of the knowledge of this Dīn and in teaching it. He must stay away from all which does not concern him and he must not try to enquire about it. He must make knowledge a means for the acquisition of Allāh's Pleasure and meeting with Him. He must not forget to seek forgiveness for me and he must remember me in his pious du'ā's. I ask Allāh ﷻ to inspire us to do all which He loves and which pleases Him and to make his Hereafter better than his worldly life.

All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ, salutations to the best of His Creation, our master, Muḥammad, his family, Companions and all his followers.

Written on Saturday, 7th Jumādā al-Ūlā 1292 after the emigration of the Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ
That is all.

The servant, Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, may Allāh pardon him, wrote this with his own pen. 1292 A.H.

POINTS OF REFLECTION FROM THE AHĀDĪTH AND QUR'ĀN

1. Maulwī Mīr Shāh Khān Sāhib asked:

"Hadrat Mūsā ؑ had made this *du'ā'* to Allāh ؑ:

وَاخْلُكْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

*"Untie the knot from my tongue
so that people may understand what I am saying."*

Allāh ؑ expressed the acceptance of his supplication by saying:

أَوْتَيْتَ سَوْكَ يَا مُوسَى

"Your request has been accepted, O Mūsā!"

However, his speech impediment remained with him for the rest of his life. When he used to speak, he would strike his hands on his thighs out of frustration due to this impediment."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī replied spontaneously:

"Mūsā's ؑ *du'ā'* was in itself incomplete. He had asked Allāh ؑ to untie the knot in his tongue to the extent that people may understand his speech. Thus, this request was accepted and fulfilled. Consequently, whenever he spoke, his words could be clearly understood by the people and they knew what he was saying – regardless of the fact that he stuttered.

Had he not said ...

يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

“... so that people may understand what I am saying.”

... his *du'ā'* would have been complete and the stutter would have been removed completely.”

2. Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked:

“Will the deceased receive the reward for the *fātiḥah* and *īṣāl-e-thawāb* which is done in their favour in the manner in which it is done by the *bid'atīs*?”

Hadrat replied spontaneously:

“Why should they not receive the actual reward for the recitation of the *Qur'ān* – even though they will be sinful for committing the superfluous matters?

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ، وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

“Whoever does an iota of good, shall see the recompense of it, and whoever does an iota of evil, shall see the recompense of it.”

3. There was a time when Hadrat was trying to rectify a particular general misconception. Regarding this, he said: “It is also *ḥarām* to give anything to these strong and robust poor people who have made begging their occupation and salient feature, because [a Hadīth states]:

لا يحل السؤال لغني ولا لذي مرة سوي

“It is not permissible for a healthy and able-bodied person to beg.”

The prohibition on their begging is established from this Hadīth and giving to them would entail supporting and aiding a *ḥarām*. [Allāh ﷻ says]:

ولا تعاونوا على الإثم

"Do not aid each other in sin."

The prohibition on giving to them is also established on the basis of the principle that: '*supporting a harām is also harām.*'"

When Hadrat said this, many people misunderstood it and presented some misgivings and objections. They said: "[A Hadīth states]:

للسائل عليك حق ولو جاء على فرس

"A beggar has a right over you even if he comes on a horse [i.e. even if he appears to be wealthy]."

Hadrat provided intricate explanations to this and other objections. From among these, a strong objection was made on the basis of the verse:

أما السائل فلا تنهر

"As for the beggar, do not drive him away."

He received several written and verbal objections on the basis of the above verse. Then, on one occasion, something crossed his mind and he entered with full fervour and said: "Maulwī Yāhyā! Go and check the different *tafāsīr* (commentaries of the Qur'ān) and see what meaning they have provided. Check if anyone explained it as above. And I will then explain its meaning."

Consequently, *Baydāwī*, *Madārīk*, *Jalālayn* and other commentaries were consulted and all of them wrote the same thing. That is:

إن كان عندك فاعطه وإلا فلا تزجره

*"If you have anything to give to the beggar, give it to him.
If you do not have, do not rebuke him [do not drive
him away]."*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī returned after 'asr and addressed the assembly saying:

"I am surprised, such senior people did not write anything in this regard! I am astonished at the fact that Allāh ﷻ is saying: 'Do not drive him away' and people are taking the meaning of 'give him when he begs'. How can the act of giving be established from the words فلا تنهر (do not drive him away)? Apart from this, we should at least ponder over what was said in the verses preceding this verse. What is Allāh ﷻ saying?

الم يجدك يتيما فأوى ووجدك ضالاً فهدى ووجدك عائلاً فأغنى

Here, Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reminded of Allāh's favours upon him. Allāh ﷻ is saying to him:

"Remember your early days when you were an orphan and We provided you with shelter. You did not know the way and We guided you. You were poor and We gave you wealth."

This is followed by an order:

So, now you must not be harsh to an orphan because you have understood his value. You must not drive away the poor, because you have experienced a time of poverty and is able to gauge what it is and what genuine poverty means.

In short, the person who is poor to the extent of being in genuine need is the one who is referred to in this verse. If we were to take it to refer to any beggar, there will remain no correlation and connection with the previous verses."

4. A person asked:

"Hadrat, if a person is unable to engage in his *wazīfah* (*dhikr* and other acts of devotion) at night, will he receive the same reward if he were to make up for it (i.e. make *qadā'*) during the day?"

Hadrat replied:

"Why not? [he will certainly get the same reward]. Allāh ﷻ says:

هو الذي جعل الليل والنهار خلفه لمن أراد أن يذكر أو أراد شكورا

'It is He who caused the night and day to follow each other for he who wants to reflect or wants to be grateful.'"

5. Maulwī Abū al-Barakāt Sāhib Mau'ī asked:

"Hadrat, what is the meaning of:

صدق الله وكذب بطن فلان الحديث أو كما قال³³

And what does the word كذب mean?"

Hadrat replied:

"When he experienced diarrhoea, it seemed as if [the honey] only served to worsen his illness. But, in actual fact, it was the cause for him regaining his health. Rasūlullāh ﷺ referred to this as كذب because the obvious meaning of كذب is when there is a conflict [or contrast] between the outward and the inward."

³³ A Sahābī came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and complained of diarrhoea and a continuous running stomach. Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed that he should be given honey to drink. He carried out this order of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and instead of the diarrhoea stopping, the honey seemed to make it worse. He went back and said: "O Rasūlullāh! The more honey I consumed, the worse my diarrhoea became." He replied: "Go and drink more honey." He returned a third time and said: "O Rasūlullāh! The diarrhoea has become worse." Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Allāh ﷻ spoke the truth [Allāh ﷻ must have informed him via revelation that the honey will certainly treat his complaint], but his stomach spoke a lie."

6. Hadrat provided the following explanation to these verses:

ءَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ، لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا

*"Do you cultivate it or are We the Cultivators?
Had We Willed, We would have reduced it to trampled grass."*

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أَجَاجًا

"Have you sent it down from the clouds or is it We Who send it down? Had We Willed, We would have made it salty."

"In the first verse, Allāh ﷻ uses the word **لَجَعَلْنَاهُ** with a **لَام**, while in the second verse, He merely says **جَعَلْنَاهُ** without a **لَام**. Absolute and total eloquence is taken into consideration here. When it comes to agriculture, man generally has some influence over it. There was the possibility of the crop becoming productive and man might have assumed, or thought to himself that: 'I have the ability and resources to protect and ensure the survival of this crop which has grown through my efforts and care.'

In order to remove such thoughts from him, Allāh ﷻ emphasized it with a letter of emphasis (**لَام التَّأَكِيدِ**) and said: 'Man can do nothing. If We Will, We can destroy it completely.'

As for the descending of rain ... man has no control or influence over it whatsoever. That is why there was no need to emphasize this point. Due to his absolute helplessness, no false thought can delude man's mind into assuming that he has the ability of protecting the water or making it useful. If there is no rain, he will have to look up to the skies and wait for it to come down [he can do nothing about it]. If the water becomes salty, he will be left frustrated and will not be able to do anything about it."

7. Hadrat said:

"A Hadīth states: *'The Resurrection will only come when there is not a single person in this world to take the Name of Allāh ﷻ'*

We learn from this Hadīth that, even if there is just one person who takes the Name of Allāh – just once during that day – the heavens and the earth will remain intact and Resurrection will not take place. This means that the blessing contained in the Name of Allāh ﷻ is such that, even if a person would say it once with his tongue, it would keep the heavens and earth intact."

8. Hadrat was explaining the following Hadīth:

تَعْبُدُ رَبَّكَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ، الْحَدِيثُ

"Worship your Lord as though you are seeing Him. If you are unable to imagine this, [then at least think to yourself] that He is watching you."

Hadrat said:

"The letter فاء [in the word فَإِنَّهُ] in this context shows 'illat (cause). The Hadīth will thus mean: 'Worship Allāh ﷻ in such a manner as though you are seeing Him because if you do not see Him (as it is not possible to see Him in this world), He is seeing you.'

This is the reason why the words كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ were written with a *harf tashbīh* (a letter showing similarity, or which has the same meaning as 'as if') – 'as though you are seeing Him.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not say تَرَاهُ – 'you are really seeing Him.' The second part of this Hadīth, namely فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ – up until the end, is brought to further establish the first part of the Hadīth, that is كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ, and not to refute or separate it as is assumed by commentators in general. If a separation of the two were intended, the Hadīth would have read –

فإن لم تكن في درجة كأنك تراه فإنه يراك

After removing this confusion, Imām Rabbānī said:

"The essence of *taṣawwuf* and the highest level of perfection is this very thing which Rasūlullāh ﷺ said in these two words. All the striving and spiritual exercises are done for the acquisition of this very same *iḥsān*. All the lessons and instructions of *Dīn* are taught and issued with the aim of acquiring this essence and core of *taṣawwuf*."

9. "It has been explicitly established from the *Aḥadīth* that, when one eats the meat of camels, it breaks one's *wuḍū'*. Although it is possible to provide a rationalization for it, what is the need to rationalize it and move away from the obvious meaning?"

"When *Hadrat* Abū Hurayrah ؓ said that *wuḍū'* becomes obligatory upon eating *مما مسّت النار* (anything which is heated by the fire), *Hadrat* 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ؓ raised an objection and asked: *أتوضأ من الحميم* ('Must I perform *wuḍū'* with hot water?' [which has obviously been heated by fire]).

This objection of a jurist (*faqīh*) shows that the *Hadīth* refers to the literal meaning of *wuḍū'* (which means to wash the hands) and not to the *Shar'ī* meaning (which means to perform a complete *wuḍū'* by washing the face, hands, passing wet hands over the head, and washing the feet). Furthermore, a *maṣfū'* *Hadīth* also shows *wuḍū'* to mean washing or cleanliness. Thus, *wuḍū'* in the sense of washing or cleanliness has been established. Thus this meaning will be taken here. There is a greater need to rinse the mouth and wash the hands after eating camel meat as opposed to after eating [for example] goat meat. This is because camel meat has a strong smell. The *Hanafīs* and *Shāfi'īs* are therefore of the opinion that eating camel meat – as in the case of other foods which are heated over the

fire – does not break *wudū*'. Rather, it necessitates washing of the hands and gargling so as to remove the possibility of causing discomfort [due to the smell of one's mouth] to fellow humans and the angels.

In addition to this, Hadrat Jābir رضي الله عنه said:

كان آخر الأمرين من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ترك الوضوء مما
غَيَّرَت النار

The general nature of the words *ما غَيَّرَت* (which means, whatever has been changed by the fire, or whatever has been cooked) would thus include camel meat as well. These are the points which caused the *jamhūr* (majority of jurists) to shift away from the obvious meaning. And Allāh سبحانه knows best."

10. "The story of Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه rebuilding the Ka'bah – as it had been when it was erected by Ibrāhīm عليه السلام – is related in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The narration states that he extended its length more than what it actually was. Then Hajjāj, acting under the instruction of 'Abd al-Malik, maintained the length as it was but reduced the remainder to its original dimensions. No alterations were made to it after this. The objection to this: How can the *ṣalāh* that is performed in line with this extended portion – which is beyond the original dimensions of the Ka'bah and therefore not part of the Ka'bah – be valid? A serious concession will have to be made in the *ṣalāh*.

Original length	Extended length
A	B

For example, in the above illustration, the *ṣalāh* of 'A' will be valid,

while the salāh of 'B' will not be valid.

The word طول (length) in the Hadīth of Muslim refers to ارتفاع إلى (height) and not to 'length and breadth' – whether to the north, south, east or west. Thus, this means that the height was maintained and the extended portion on the Haṭīm side was reduced. The area above the Ka'bah – reaching up to the heavens – is considered to be the qiblah – this is obvious. If the word طول was taken to mean length in either direction, then how would it be correct to say that the Ka'bah is as it was when it was constructed by Hadrat Ibrāhīm عليه السلام because, in such a case, it would go beyond the original construction? Nevertheless, in this context, the word طول (length) refers to ارتفاع (height). Allāh ﷻ knows best."

11. "The words إلا ثوب عصب contain an explicit exception, whereas the Hanafīs and Shāfi'īs are of the opinion that it is harām. What is the proof for its prohibition?"

"The linguistic and Shar'ī meaning of the word ihdād (mourning) is: 'abstaining from beautifying oneself'. Thus, anything which entails beautification will be prohibited. A ثوب مُعَصَّب (a cloth which is tie-dyed) is a cloth of extreme beautification. You must have seen the chunrī (a coloured scarf), which Hindu women wear on their weddings. This cloth is therefore harām.

One of the meanings of عصب is 'a black colour' and this is what is excluded. Another text says: ولا تلبس ثوبا مصبوغا (a woman in mourning must not wear dyed garments). Coloured clothing was included in the word عصب, whereas there is no beautification in it [in black clothing]. This is the reason for the exception. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

12.

اتجعل نهبي ونهب العبيد - بين عيينة والأقرع

"In the first part of the statement, does the word بين (between) in the above context mean دون (to the exclusion of) or something else? Is it considered in its literal or metaphorical meaning?"

"The word بين means 'between' and there is no need to consider another meaning to it because the 'Uyaynah and Aqra' [names of tribes] were given 100 each. If he was given less, then it is as if his portion had been distributed between the 'Uyaynah and Aqra'. For example, if he was given eighty, the 'Uyaynah and Aqra' would each have received twenty more than him. This totals to forty more. He did not receive this amount either and it was distributed between the 'Uyaynah and Aqra'. The meaning is therefore correct: 'Are you distributing some of my share between the 'Uyaynah and Aqra'? Do not do this. Rather, give me my share and let all the shares be equal.' Allāh ﷻ knows best."

13. "In the story of the Qaysarah woman from the Banī Isrā'īl, the text reads thus:

وضعت خاتماً من ذهب مغلق مطبق حشته مسكاً

What is the meaning of مغلق مطبق in the above text?

It means that the stone which was set in the ring was raised from all sides, a hollow was left in the centre and it was covered from above in such a way that the musk could not fall out from the top. It was covered from above, but done in a manner which would allow the perfume to be emitted. If it was completely covered and sealed, how would the perfume have been emitted? Alternatively, we could say that it was covered by a very fine gauze or netting which permitted the continued emission of the perfume.

Allāh ﷻ knows best."

14. "The story of Abū Hurayrah ؓ is mentioned in باب جرّ الإزار (the chapter on wearing the lower garment below the ankles). The narration states that when he saw someone wearing the lower garment below his ankles, he related a Hadīth. It mentions the words وهو أمير على البحرين (he was the governor of Bahrain). Who does this refer to? Then the text states: يضرب رجله على الأرض (he was striking his feet on the ground). Who does this refer to? Why is the fact that Marwān appointed someone as a deputy mentioned in this narration?"

[The answer]:

وهو أمير على البحرين أي الرجل الجاني يضرب أبو هريرة رجله على الأرض يعني مسخري واستهزاء.

"Abū Hurayrah ؓ struck his feet on the ground to mock and ridicule – as is normally done by people when criticizing or censuring someone else. He was saying جاء الأمير جاء الأمير – that is: 'The governor of Bahrain is approaching, dragging his lower garment below his ankles and he is not ashamed of this ḥarām act.' The appointment of a deputy is mentioned to point out that Abū Hurayrah ؓ had the courage to mock someone and to openly show his disapproval. Moreover, to censure the governor of Bahrain. This is because even the caliph used to respect him [referring to Abū Hurayrah ؓ] and hold him in high esteem. If this were not the case, he would not have had the courage to say this to the governor. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

15. "Hindah freed Zayd and she passed away leaving behind one son, 'Umar, and one brother, Bakr. 'Umar then passed away leaving behind a paternal uncle, Khālīd. This was followed by the death of Zayd (the freed slave). A dispute arose between Khālīd and Bakr.

Khālīd said: 'When Hindah [the *mu'tiqah* – woman who freed Zayd] passed away, her son, 'Umar, was present. He is therefore an heir by virtue of *walā'* (clientage) and since I am the '*asabah* of 'Umar, (after 'Umar passed away, Zayd's *walā'* which was the right of 'Umar) now comes to me.'

Bakr said: 'When the *mu'tiq* [freed slave – Zayd] passed away, I was the only one remaining from the '*asabāt* of the *mu'tiqah* [Hindah], because I am her blood brother. You therefore have no right of *walā'*.'

According to the narration of *Abū Dā'ūd*, Khālīd ought to have the right of *walā'*. And according to the narration of *Muwattā Imām Muḥammad*, Bakr ought to have the right of *walā'*. This is the difference on the basis of these two narrations. The *Hanafīs*' practice is based on the narration of *Muwattā*. I would like to know why preference is given to this narration and what is the reply to the narration of *Abū Dā'ūd*."

"I did not understand the crux of your question the first time, but have understood it now. *Hadrat* 'Umar رضي الله عنه and other *Sahābah* رضي الله عنهم said: *أقرب إلى الميت كبر* and the meaning of *كبر* is *الولاء لكبر*. The *jamhūr mujtahidīn* (majority of the jurists) have accepted this, placed the principle *الولاء لا يورث* before them, and established that *ولاء* is on the basis of *نصرت*. Consequently, they did not act on the apparent ruling of *Hadrat* 'Umar رضي الله عنه – which is quoted in *Abū Dā'ūd* and other *Hadīth* collections.

Now the meaning of the narration of *Abū Dā'ūd* can be corrected as follows: 'The death of the *maulā* (master) had taken place while his or her children were alive.' In the words *فقد ومات* the *واو* is a general conjunction.

Thus, we will say: *أي وقد مات سابقا قريبا وقت حيوة البنين*

The quarter of the wealth was given twice and it should have been returned to the Banū Ma'mar. It was this amount which 'Umar ؓ had instructed to be returned. The words ما أحرز الولد therefore refer to the wealth itself, because *walā'*, which is *لحمة كلحمة النسب*, cannot be passed on to someone else and is not for the protection of wealth.

Alternatively, this incident may have taken place during the era of 'Abd al-Malik. He did not understand it and neither did 'Umar ibn al-'Ās, and he therefore made *qiyās* of the wealth on the basis of *walā'*. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

16. "It can be gauged from the *Aḥadīth* that it is *Sunnah* to read *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* in the *janāzah ṣalāh*. The statements of some *Ṣaḥābah* ؓ can negate the emphasis on its recital, but not its actual *sunniyyat* [the fact that it is a *Sunnah*]. What is then the proof for saying that there was no *qirā'ah* [of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*] and that there was *thanā'* instead?"

"A *mustaḥab* act refers to an act of worship which Rasūlullāh ﷺ did a few times, whereafter he omitted it so that it does not become *wājib* or emphasised (*mu'akkad*). Then there are certain acts which he used to do, whereafter he would replace it with a different act. This second act is known as *rukḥṣat* or *bayān-e-jawāz*. It is essential for every 'ālim to know this.

Reading the *thanā'* after the first *takbīr* of the *janāzah ṣalāh* was an act which was well-known. Ibn 'Abbās ؓ himself expressed his opinion against it. Abū Hurayrah ؓ and Ibn 'Umar ؓ explicitly said: ليس في صلاة الجنابة قراءة (there is no *qirā'ah* in the *janāzah ṣalāh*).

It becomes clear from this that Rasūlullāh's ﷺ reading of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* was read as a *thanā'* (praise of Allāh ﷻ) and *bayān-e-jawāz*

(to show permissibility), and not as a rule. If this were not the case, the recitation of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, which would have certainly occurred many times, would not have been unknown to, or concealed from the Sahābah ﷺ. For Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ to refer to such a *rukḥṣah* – which could be considered *makrūh tanzīhī* – as a Sunnah, is supported by another statement of his. The *Sunan Abī Dā‘ūd* refers to إقعاء بين السجدين (sitting between the two *sajdahs* in such a way that the buttocks are on the ground with one’s thighs and shins upright) by using the words سنة نبيكم (it is a Sunnah of your Prophet). Furthermore, the *janāzah ṣalāh* – in every aspect – is not even a *ṣalāh*. Rather, it bears more resemblance to *du‘ā’*. Based upon all this, it is more fitting to say that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is read as a *du‘ā’* and *thanā’* and not as a rule of Sunnah and *istihbāb* (*mustahab*). Allāh ﷻ knows best.”

17. “It can be learnt from the Hadīth that, if a person embraces Islam and has more than four wives, he has the choice of maintaining any four of them in his marriage – his earlier or his latter wives. Some Aḥadīth explicitly mention the word *takhyīr* (choice). What is then the proof for specifying the first four wives?”

“A total and absolute ruling cannot be learnt from the actual circumstances of this incident. Consequently, Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ statement: اختر أيتهما شئت أو اختر أربعاً (choose whichever one of the two you like, or choose four) is the place where the doubt is created with regard to the probabilities that existed. (1) Did the person marry two sisters or did he marry ten women before the prohibition of this was revealed? In such a case, his marriage to all of them would have been valid and this was followed by the prohibition of combining them. (2) Did he enter into these marriages after the prohibition was revealed? (3) Did he combine them with one *nikāh* or were several *nikāhs* performed one after the other?

In the first scenario, all the jurists unanimously state that he now had the right to choose whichever of them he pleased. The second and third scenarios could mean that he would have to separate himself from all of them and then select four [from the lot] or one of the sisters [in the case where he got married to two sisters] by entering into a new marriage with them.

Because of the above probabilities, as well as our ignorance regarding the actual incident, we have to make a juristic analysis of the situation. We see in the Sharī'ah that, if a *kāfir* marries a *mahram* (a woman who is prohibited to him, e.g. his mother, sister, daughter), the ruling is that they must be separated after embracing Islam. Thus, in this case also, it would be *wājib* upon him to separate himself from the *nikāhs* which were *harām*. The reason for this is that, when it comes to subsidiary issues (*masā'il-e-far'īyyah*), the most correct opinion would be that the *kuffār* are being addressed, but we do not have the right to impose the ruling on them. However, once they embrace Islam, it becomes *wājib* upon us to impose the ruling on them. It would therefore be *wājib* upon us to remove the impermissible action which he had committed, and not the permissible. Thus, when we look at the two sisters which he had married one after the other, we would say that his marriage to the second sister was impermissible and not his marriage to the first sister. In the case where he married both at the same time, we would say that his marriage to both is considered to be invalid. In the case where the person married ten wives consecutively, his marriage to the first four would be considered as valid and his marriage to the remaining wives would be invalid. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

18. "If a merchant finds the exact item which he had sold to a person who has been categorized as *muflis* (bankrupt, insolvent), he has the greater right over the item. This is established from many *Aḥādīth*. Some *Aḥādīth* explicitly mention the word *ابتاع* (bought). Therefore it is difficult to accept any other interpretation. So, how

will this be explained?"

"In the issue of a buyer passing away, it is stated that – if an insolvent buyer passes away, all his creditors will have an equal right over his estate. A Hadīth in this regard is mentioned in *Abū Dā'ūd*. This is the proof of Imām Sāhib. In the case of a transaction of sale, the seller enjoys a greater right over the item before the buyer takes possession of it. Complete ownership has not gone to the buyer, because he has not taken possession of the item as yet."

19. "In the story of the Banū Qurayzah, we learn that the growth of pubic hair is considered to be a sign of puberty. Will it be permissible for us to consider other signs in order to specify the time of the onset of puberty, as is considered by Imām Aḥmad *rahimahullāh*. What would be the reason for not taking such signs into consideration at all?"

"If we are unable to ascertain the age of a person, then – in the cases of murder, the Sharī'ah orders us to act upon 'the growth of pubic hair'. This is because we were unable to determine the age of the person. There is no specific time for the onset of the growth of pubic hair, nor for that of the beard and no other [visible] proof of puberty exists. The Hanafīs therefore do not consider these other signs to be the basis for determining puberty. If it can be proven that the growth of pubic hair does not occur without puberty, or if there is a real need to ascertain puberty, we may act upon this ruling [of using the growth of pubic hair to establish the onset of puberty]. There is a statement of imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* wherein he does consider the growth of pubic hair. However, this will only be considered if there is no other way of ascertaining puberty and if there is a real need to determine it. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

20. "A person committed adultery with his wife's slave-woman. A Sahābī issued the ruling that, if his wife gave him permission, the punishment would probably be lashing; and if his wife did not give

him permission, the punishment would probably be stoning to death. Upon which principle is this ruling based and what is the answer to it?"

"This ruling of Nu'mān ibn Bashīr is in line with the ruling of the Hanafīs who say: 'If a person has intercourse with his wife's slave-woman and says that he considered her to be lawful, the hadd will fall away on the basis of misunderstanding (*shubhah*).'

In the abovementioned instance, he engaged in intercourse because his wife had permitted him to do so and he believed the act to be permissible. That is why he [the Sahābī] said that he will not stone him. The hundred lashes were meant as a reprimand. This was also the opinion of Hadrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه.

In the instance where the wife did not permit him, it is obvious that it would be harām for him to commit the act and he would therefore be eligible for stoning. However, in the case where the act is committed due to misunderstanding, the hadd would fall away and the person would be punished as a reprimand. But, Nu'mān's statement with regard to the case at hand, was certainly not due to a misgiving or doubt on his part. Allāh سبحانه knows best."

21. "According to our *madh-hab*, the Arab *kuffār* were offered the option of embracing Islam or being put to the sword. However, the enslavement (*istirqāq*) of Arabs is established from many Aḥadīth. Is there any proof to the contrary?"

"The Hanafī madh-hab's view of the impermissibility of enslaving Arabs is thus: Fighters who are *bāligh* (have reached the age of puberty) may not be enslaved. The *jizyah* must be imposed upon them and they must be released, as is done with apostates (*murtad*). There is no Ḥadīth to the contrary for which we have to give an answer. It is permissible to enslave their progeny (*dharārī*) and this is what is established from the Aḥadīth."

22. "We learn from the Hadīth that a person who sits and performs ṣalāh shall receive half the reward of standing and if he performs it lying down, he will receive half the reward of sitting. If his sitting or lying down is because of a valid excuse, what is the reason for halving the reward?"

"The Ahadīth clearly state that, if a person does good deeds while he is healthy and sound, he shall receive the full reward when he is ill, despite not doing those actions, let alone when changing his posture. However, if it applies to performing ṣalāh in this way without a valid excuse – as is obvious – we ought to consider the permissibility and validity of lying down and performing ṣalāh, as is [permitted in] the *madh-hab* of Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh*.

This issue is related to *nafl ṣalāh*.

A sick person, who performs his ṣalāh while lying down – even though he is not completely unable to stand or sit and is able to perform it standing or sitting, albeit with bearable difficulty – such a person's *fard ṣalāh* will not be valid while lying down. In the case where he can stand, his *fard ṣalāh* will not be valid if it is performed while lying down or sitting.

Yes, as far as the *nafl ṣalāh* is concerned, he will certainly receive half the reward if he performs it while sitting, just as a normal healthy person would. However, if he is sick, it would be permissible for him to perform his *nafl ṣalāh* while lying down in the case where there are many *nafl ṣalāhs*. As for a normal healthy person ... it is not permissible for him to perform the *nafl ṣalāh* while lying down because this practice is not established from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

23. "A text of *Tirmidhī* (Mujtabā'ī edition, p. 47) reads thus³⁴:

قال ابن المبارك: ما بين المشرق والمغرب قبلة" هذا لأهل المشرق واختار
عبد الله بن المبارك التياسر لأهل مرو.

What is the reason for specifying أهل المشرق and أهل مرو?"

"It was popularly believed that this Hadīth applied to the qiblah of the people of Madīnah. Therefore 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak said that this rule also applied to the أهل المشرق – the easterners who live to the east of Makkah e.g. Marw, Herat, Bukhārā.

Since Ibn al-Mubārak was a resident of Marw and this city lies to the east, he mentioned Marw specifically, although it does not apply to any place in particular. Rather, this qiblah is for the places which are to the south, and to the north of Makkah. Only a few places to the east are included."

24. "A Hadīth on page 57 reads:

فتقدم على راحلته فصلى بهم الخ

According to Hanafīs, *ittiḥād-e-makān* (that the *imām* and *muqtaḍī* are at the same place) is a prerequisite for the validity of the *muqtaḍī's* ṣalāh. What reply will we give to this Hadīth? Will we consider the ruling of impermissibility to be a deduction of some of the latter jurists and label this ruling as incorrect?"

"This incident took place out of necessity. There was a lot of mud

³⁴ The beginning of this text is:

قال ابن عمر إذا جعلت المغرب بين يمينك والمشرق عن يسارك فما بينهما
قبلة إذا استقبلت القبلة وقال ابن المبارك...

and there was no place to stand. It is not permissible to perform a *fard ṣalāh* while sitting on an animal. The postures of standing, bowing and prostrating all fell away because of *durūrah* (unavoidable need). In like manner, the condition of *ittihād-e-makān* between *imām* and *muqtadī* also fell away. What is then the objection? When the *Hanafīs* lay down the condition of *ittihād-e-makān* for the validity of the *muqtadī's* *ṣalāh*, they said that it applied in the case where there is no *durūrah* – and not under all circumstances. Thus, because the condition of *ittihād-e-makān* fell away in this particular situation, why should there be any objection when three compulsory *arkān* (plural of *rukn* – standing, bowing and prostrating postures) fell away? Allāh ﷻ knows best.”

25. “The permissibility of congregation for *nafl ṣalāh* can be gauged from many *Aḥadīth*. What is the *Hanafīs'* reason for rejection? What is the proof for differentiating between *tadā'ī* (calling people for the *nafl ṣalāh* congregation by announcing it) and '*adm-e-tadā'ī* (not calling people)? Also, what is the correct explanation of *tadā'ī*?”

“What do we learn from the ‘many *Aḥadīth*’ which you refer to? Do they refer to any congregation for *nafl ṣalāh* or do some of them show that the congregation was restricted to three *muqtadīs*? The *Hanafīs* consider the latter [where the congregation is restricted to three *muqtadīs*] to be permissible.

However, where there is *tadā'ī* – which is explained as *kathrat* (many) – in the sense that there are four *muqtadīs* and the *imām* is the fifth person, then they consider this to be *makrūh-e-tahrīmī*. The literal meaning of *tadā'ī* is ‘to call each other’ and its essential consequence is *kathrat*. This *kathrat* needs *ihtimām* (to give importance to something) and *ihtimām-e-jamā'at* (to give importance to congregation) and is applicable to the *fard ṣalāh* and not the *nafl ṣalāh*. The salient feature of *nafl ṣalāh* is *infirād* (individual performance) and *ikhfā'* (performing it in privacy, or

not announcing it). Thus, when importance is given to *nafl* congregation, it will be *makrūh-e-tahrīmī* unless in situations where there are exceptions, for instance *kusūf*, *istisqā'*, *tarāwīh*, or less than four *muqtadīs* – because this is *khilāf-e-qiyās* (against the norm). Apart from this, any *nafl ṣalāh* must be performed individually so that one does not become guilty of transgressing the limits of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ knows best.”

26. “We learn from the *Sihāh* that two *iqāmahs* were called out for *maghrib* and '*ishā ṣalāh* in Muzdalifah. What is the reason for leaving this affirmative narration and practising on the negative narration, namely the narration which states one *iqāmah*?”

“The following can be established from the various narrations with regard to [combining the *maghrib* and '*ishā ṣalāh* in] Muzdalifah: (1) two *iqāmahs* and two *adhāns*, (2) one *adhān* and two *iqāmahs*, (3) one *adhān* and one *iqāmah*.

When the negative narration is similar to the affirmative narration, the affirmative is considered to be contradictory. This is the contradiction here. We therefore resort to *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) and *qiyās* demands that there should be just one *iqāmah*, because the '*ishā ṣalāh* is performed at its appointed time, while the *maghrib* time has expired. The *adhān* and *iqāmah* are thus given for the '*ishā ṣalāh*. Preference is therefore given to this. Allāh ﷻ knows best.”

27. “The *Ḥadīth* prohibits the acceptance of money for a cat. Why do we move away from this obvious prohibition? In like manner, there are many *Aḥadīth* which the '*ulamā*' use to rationalize [their decision of moving away from the obvious ruling] when there seems to be no proof for moving away from the obvious ruling. Is there any principle for this? Is there a definite reason for moving away from the obvious, or is it based solely on the explanation of a *mujtahid*?”

"It is permissible to use anything which is classified as *māl* (an asset, possession or wealth). It is also permissible to purchase and sell it – for example, a dog. As per the general ruling, the money one receives for the sale of a cat would also be permissible, because it is classified as *māl* and it is also permissible to keep a cat. The Hanafis therefore consider the prohibition to be *tanzīhī* – in other words, it is not becoming of a person to demand a price, even for something like a cat. Whereas, the general principle demands that it should be permissible. The Hanafī view is thus based on the general principle. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

28. "A Hadīth states:

من قتل متعمدا دفع إلى أولياء المقتول فإن شاؤا قتلوا وإن شاؤا أخذوا الدية وهي ثلاثون حقة وثلاثون جذعة وأربعون خلفه وما صالحوا عليه فهو لهم.

The intentional killing, which is mentioned above, can never be taken to mean 'resemblance to an intentional killing' because the words *فإن شاؤا قتلوا* (if they wish, they may kill him) refute this. Thus, it clearly means 'intentional killing.

The words *فإن شاؤا قتلوا وإن شاؤا أخذوا الدية* (if they wish, they may kill him, or they may take blood money) explicitly provide them with a choice. What is the explanation for this?

Furthermore, the words *ما صالحوا عليه* (whatever they agree upon) indicate that this choice is given before the agreement because, in the case where they take blood money, the blood money has not been specified. In the case where they come to an agreement, the agreement has not been specified. In the case of an agreement, specification and non-specification of the choice is collectively found.

The other objection in this regard is that the Hanafis say: In the case

of an intentional killing, sulh over and above the specified blood money is not permissible, while it can be gauged from the Hadīth that it is permissible. This fact can be gauged from the words:

وما صالحوا عليه فهو لهم.

The Hanafīs also do not refute the issue of a 'choice'. The only difference is that, in the case of 'intentional killing', qisās becomes wājib. If qisās is pardoned with the condition that blood money will be taken, then blood money is not waived. Thus, blood money may be taken, or the person may be killed. There is no doubt in this. Once blood money is established, they have the choice of taking the camels or making sulh. Thus, there is no non-compliance to the Hadīth here. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

29. "In *Ibn Mājah*, in the chapter باب زكوة الجنين زكوة أمه a statement is quoted after the Hadīth. It reads thus:

"الزكوة لا يقضى بها مذمة" قال مذمة بكسر الهمزة وبفتح الهمزة من الذم.

What connection does this statement have with the Hadīth and what does it mean?"

"The issue revolves around زكوة الجنين and the above statement was popularly made with regard to it. The author is explaining the statement by saying that the word مذمة is [written] with a kasrah and not with a fathah. Allāh ﷻ knows best."

30. "A Hadīth states:

من قال لا إله إلا الله ومات على ذلك دخل الجنة

'The person who says *Lā ilāha illallāh* and passes away in that state shall enter Paradise.'

Upon hearing this, Abū Dharr ؓ asked: وإن زنى وإن سرق ('Even if he commits adultery and steals?'). Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied: وإن زنى وإن سرق ('Even if he commits adultery and steals'). There appears to be a contradiction between this Hadīth and all the other Aḥadīth which mention punishment for acts of disobedience, immorality, impermissible acts and major sins. I hope you will be able to satisfy and console my troubled heart with a short and comprehensive explanation. What misgiving and hesitation did Abū Dharr ؓ have about a *fāsiq* (flagrant sinner), an adulterer or a thief, or one who commits a major sin entering Paradise which caused him to ask this question three times? Eventually he received the reply: على رغم أنف أبي ذر (even if Abū Dharr dislikes it)"

"Entry into Paradise is unrestricted. The existence of an individual is sufficient for the existence of something which is unrestricted. Thus, if a person reads the *kalimah* and affirms whatever Rasūlullāh ﷺ had come with, then – although he is a *fāsiq* for leaving out good deeds [or committing evil deeds] – he is still a Muslim. He will be admitted into Paradise after being taken to task for his evils and the correctness of the above Hadīth of Abū Dharr ؓ will be made manifest. Thus, no Hadīth which mentions punishment, contradicts this Hadīth, nor do we learn of any *fāsiq* who will not be punished. There remains no doubt now. Hadrat Abū Dharr ؓ repeated his question several times because he knew that these actions are not condoned by Islam. This is the reason for his astonishment and for him asking: 'Even if he commits adultery and steals?' When Rasūlullāh ﷺ emphasised that such a person will enter Paradise, he understood that committing these acts does not entail *kufr* and that general entry into Paradise will be realized. That is all."

JURISTIC ACUMEN AND IFTĀ'

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's juristic acumen and his ability to derive and extract rulings and injunctions were unparalleled in his era. I therefore consider it appropriate to present some juristic perplexities to serve as examples.

It was his habit to reply to each questioner according to his understanding. When providing written and verbal replies, he would give due consideration to the capabilities and mental capacity of the masses, intelligentsia, '*ulamā*' and ignoramuses alike. The '*ulamā*' would present their doubts and misgivings according to their rank, and the masses according to their position and understanding. Since Hadrat Maulānā was the crown of the '*ulamā*' of his time, many great, erudite, senior, intelligent, sharp-witted and leading '*ulamā*' of his time would reach the end of their knowledge and understanding and present him with their unsolvable and difficult issues – either in writing or verbally.

Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfīz al-Hāj ash-Shāh Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] *mudda zilluhu* [*rahimahullāh*] wrote:

(1) "After urinating, we are taught to dry ourselves with a clod of earth. I used to think that there is no proof for this from any *marfū*' Hadīth. I asked Hadrat Imām Rabbānī about this on one occasion. He immediately read the following *marfū*' Hadīth to me as a proof:

استنزهوا من البول فإن عامة عذاب القبر منه

'Cleanse yourself after urinating, because most of the punishment in the grave will be because of carelessness in this regard.'

To dry oneself with a clod of earth certainly falls under the act of 'cleansing'. I was fully satisfied [with this answer]."

(2) "We are taught to raise the index finger in the *tashahhud*. I was not sure whether any Hadīth mentions for how long the finger must be raised. When I asked Hadrat about this, he immediately replied: 'There is a Hadīth in *Kitāb ad-Da'wāt* of *Tirmidhī* which states that, after the *tashahhud*, Rasūlullāh ﷺ read a certain *du'ā'* and he was pointing with his index finger while reading this *du'ā'*. It is obvious that the *du'ā'* is read until just before the *salām*. It is thus proven from the Hadīth that it was raised until the end.' Hadrat added: 'People search for this ruling in *Bāb at-Tashahhud* and do not find it there. Thus, they assume that it is not mentioned in the Hadīth.' Imām Rabbānī's mental agility [swift shifting from one point to another], his ability to extract rulings and his juristic acumen are all clearly demonstrated through these two incidents."

First of all, I think it would be appropriate to present to the reader the correspondence which took place between Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Qārī Shāh Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī *mudda zilluhu [rahimahullāh]* during 1314 A.H. Thereafter, I will quote examples of fifteen doubts and misgivings which were presented to Hadrat Maulānā from amongst the various '*ulamā*', ascetics, intelligentsia and Muslim masses.

The '*allāmah*' of the era, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib's profound knowledge is accepted by every '*ālim*' in India. Thus, the strength of his doubts and misgivings should be understood accordingly. Together with this, Maulānā Thānwī's natural Allāh-endowed qualities are also worthy of consideration. He was blessed with soundness of heart, submission to the truth, and utmost humility. Furthermore, his return to the truth spoke of a total absence of pride and haughtiness and an indisputable manifestation of knowledge for the sake of truth.

His perfection had reached such a level, that I [the author] can take an oath in Allāh's Name that: "Washing the feet of Maulānā Thānwī, and drinking the water, would serve as a means of

salvation in the Hereafter.”³⁵ These letters are an example of emulation and submission and it is a valuable memoir of Maulānā Thānwī for the ‘*ulamā*’ of our times. It is also an example of the revival of a redundant Sunnah which manifested itself for the first time in the fourteenth century.

Apart from being the crown of the ‘*ulamā*’, I consider Maulānā Thānwī to be my respected leader and *Dīnī* master. This pure letter will, *inshā Allāh*, be transformed into a guarantee of forgiveness and a sealed certificate of spiritual soundness and *īmān* and presented to Maulānā before the entire creation on the Day of Resurrection. I thus include it in this biography in the hope that a worthless person like myself might receive a share of the reward for taking part in reviving a redundant Sunnah and that I might be blessed – no matter how little – with the companionship of my Thānwī master.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HADRAT THĀNWĪ AND HADRAT IMĀM RABBĀNĪ

Letter from Hadrat Thānwī to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī:

Commencing in the Name of Allāh, Who is Most Beneficent, Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ and Peace to His most superior and greatest Messenger.

From this worthless servant to the great one, who is worthy of my service and obedience. May the Peace and Mercy of Allāh ﷻ be upon you.

My penitent heart is yearning for you. I met Maulwī Munawwar

³⁵ Translator's note: This is a statement which was made merely to show his high regard for Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and not an action which would literally be performed.

'Alī a few days ago and he said to me: 'Hadrat Maulānā is angry with you because you have chosen the way of some of your relatives which is different from Hadrat's ways. You should certainly apologize to him and make him happy.' I was severely hurt by this information and greatly pained by it. However, I blame none but myself and do not consider anything but the truth to be able to save me.

Oh Maulānā! At the time, I was drowning in an ocean of confusion and in my quest I was searching for someone to rescue me from this worry and agony. Suddenly, without any intention on my part and without seeking it, a person called out to me saying: 'Give me your hand. I will rescue you from this deep ocean.' A drowning person naturally holds on to every straw because of the terrifying situation he finds himself in. Furthermore, I was several oceans away from my beloved, my helper and my spiritual doctor [A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh]. [And thus, I responded to this call]. Despite this – all Praise is due to Allāh ﷻ – I never abandoned this advice of my pious elders for a single day: 'Embrace what is good and cast aside what is bad.' When I was conveyed to him and I presented myself before him, I renewed my intention with the hope of making up for whatever I had missed out on. However, when I returned, my thirst had increased and I was on the verge of considering a mirage to be water [I was on the verge of being deceived]. I saw myself only increasing in perplexity, confusion, constriction and terror. I then wrote to my beloved [A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh] and described my condition to him and I said this with my heart:

*'O my guide! Oh my hope!
Oh my companion when I am terrorized!
Oh my refuge for my affairs of this world and the Hereafter!
Oh my helper, have mercy on me
for I have no refuge apart from your love as a provision.
The creation has triumphed through you while I am at a loss.*

*Oh my guide, look at me with mercy.
Oh my master! Give me something for the sake of Allāh.
You are the giver, and I am asking you.'*

A'lā Hadrat accepted my apology and helped me. He embraced me with love and affection and conveyed me to the shore of safety. Consequently, I sang out of yearning and expressed with longing:

*To wake up at the time of sehrī [for tahajjud]
safeguards you from the Wrath [of Allāh ﷻ].
Waking up in the darkness of the night [for tahajjud]
is the elixir of life.*

*The worship [which is] offered by the pious saints of Allāh ﷻ
is an amazing achemy.
It turns sand and different herbs
into pure gold.*

*The snake of love has bitten my liver.
Which doctor or charmer shall I go to,
except the beloved by whom I am enamoured?
He alone has the incantation and medication to cure me!*

By Allāh, I am pleased with Allāh ﷻ as my Lord, Islam as my religion, Muḥammad ﷺ as my Prophet, my Shaykh – Imdādullāh – as a spiritual guide for this world and with you, O Maulānā, as a guide and one whose guidance is followed. I take an oath upon Allāh, whatever I said about myself and whatever I have described regarding my situation is absolutely true and nothing but the truth. It does not contain an iota of lies, fabrication, deception or humour. Oh my master! I ask you, in the Name of Allāh ﷻ, to accept my apology by virtue of your magnanimous character. Do not lend an ear to every slanderer, fault-finder and tale-bearer. Never consider me to be out of your assembly, because I truly hope to be resurrected with you. However, I do not have the courage to openly

oppose [the one who responded to me] because it is possible that he holds a lofty rank in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ, and upsetting him might lead to my humiliation and loss. I certainly consider him to be from the group which is worthy of reproach, but I do not have the authority to stop him.

Yes, I have taken it upon myself to refute – from the top of the *mimbar* and inside the *mihrāb* – anything which contradicts the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Expediency demands this secret to remain concealed so that no harm and evil may befall me. I hope that you will keep it a secret and that the person who reads this letter to you will do the same. It may well be that Allāh ﷻ chooses to bring about some other situation and that this secret is exposed.

I eagerly await you to send me the good news that you are pleased with me.

May Allāh ﷻ be pleased with you, me and all the Muslims by virtue of our master, Muḥammad ﷺ.

29 Dhū al-Qa'dah 1314A.H.

Imām Rabbānī's reply:

I thank Allāh ﷻ for all His favours. Salutations to His Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, and his family.

I received your letter and noted its contents. Your apology is clear to me and I am most pleased to know that you love the way of the Sunnah. There remains no discord and ill-feelings between you and me. However, I have heard that you have made yourself guilty of doing certain things which I consider to be *bid'ah*. You, yourself will probably not consider them to be part of the Sharī'ah. Nevertheless, even this much is hard to believe from a person like you. Turning away from the way of our *aslāf* (pious predecessors) is not the right thing to do.

As far as hastening into pledging *bay'ah* (at the hands of the person in question) and then to make up for it by turning back – I dislike the fact that you had openly committed a sin while you are seeking repentance in private. It is obvious that repentance should be in line with the sin [in other words, if committed in private, you should seek repentance in private. If committed in public, you should seek repentance in public]. How can your private repentance suffice when you are followed by the people who live around this person's town? Your *bay'ah* to him has increased his stature in those areas!

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: 'The person who initiates a good shall receive the reward for it and the reward of all those who act upon it until the Day of Resurrection. The person who initiates an evil shall bear the burden of it and the burden of all those who act upon it until the Day of Resurrection.' He also said: 'The person who accords respect to a *bid'at* has actually helped in the destruction of *Dīn*.'

I fear that the burden of leading others astray may befall you. Ponder over this. You know best what the circumstances are regarding your own situation. Allāh ﷻ is Witness to what we say.
5th Dhū al-Hijjah 1314 A.H.

Hadrat Thānwī's reply:

To the glittering light, the one worthy of my service and obedience and the one worthy of my devotion. *May Allāh perpetuate His Bestowal and Blessings.* After the *salām*, I say: I received your beloved letter on the 8th of Dhū al-Hijjah and it was an honour and privilege to receive it. My grief-stricken heart was consoled. I delayed in replying because my reply demanded deep contemplation. However, when a person is ashamed of describing his illness, the treatment becomes difficult. That is why I consider it essential to say something.

The two matters which Hadrat referred to are completely correct

and valid. I was, in fact, guilty of both. After having gained full confidence in Hadrat's affection and character, I seek permission to give free vent to my thoughts regarding these two matters. I trust that you will ponder over whatever I have to say and that you will then issue whatever order you feel would be appropriate to my situation. By Allāh, I am writing all this solely to consult with you and seek your directive. Allāh forbid! It is not my aim to engage in any argument. I firmly promise with all my heart that, once my heart has been cured, I will fully obey whatever you say, without resorting to any evasion or excuse. I hope that you will forgive my informality, but a satisfactory answer cannot be obtained without first expressing whatever is in my heart.

*No matter how much you tell the doctors
of the sadness [and pain] in your heart,
they can never prescribe a cure
for the one who is afflicted [with love].*

*As much as we try to hide
our heart's condition from our friends,
it can never remain hidden
from [the one who is] a true doctor.*

The first issue: My participation in some assemblies.

Al-hamdulillāh, I am neither dogmatic in this regard, nor do I consider it to be a means of proximity. However, I am certainly lenient to a certain extent and my leniency in this regard is because of Hadrat's statements and actions. However, I do not consider these to be Shar'ī proofs. Instead, after A'lā Hadrat's instruction, and after I pondered over this with my defective understanding, I concluded that there can be no objection to the action in itself. However, the restrictions and specifications which have been imposed are certainly *muhdath* (fall under the category of innovations). I feel that these specifications would most certainly be

classified as *bid'ah* if they were to be considered as acts of worship. On the other hand, if they were to be considered as ordinary matters – performed for the sake of expediency (usefulness) – then they would not be regarded as *bid'ah* but would be considered *mubāh* (permissible) – even though a *mubāh* act may – due to the fact that it is a means towards fulfilling an act of worship – be considered as an *'ibādah lighayrihi* (a worship for the fulfilment of another worship, or an indirect worship).

Consequently, this is the case with many *mubāh* acts. My limited understanding considers the specific methods and prescriptions of *dhikr* and *shughl* (spiritual exercise) to be of this nature, and these are practised by the *ahl-e-haqq* without any disapproval. Even upon reflection, I do not find any real difference in this. Obviously, if anyone should consider these specifications to be the essential objective, then there will be no doubt about it being a *bid'ah*.

Another thought comes to mind: Although it would not be considered as a *bid'ah i'tiqādī* (innovation in belief), the fact that importance is given to it and it is strictly adhered to would make it a *bid'ah 'amalī* (innovation in practice). However, the specific methods of *dhikr* also seem to be equal in this regard.

A third thought comes to mind: Although it will not be considered as a *bid'ah* when it applies to a person of intelligence and understanding, there is the possibility that the masses would assume it to be essential, or believe it to be an act of worship [in itself]. Thus, in order to safeguard their beliefs, it would be *wājib* to abstain from such actions. However, I see this possibility in the specific methods of *dhikr* as well, because the majority of the masses consider the specifications of these prescriptions to be essential and they doggedly adhere to them in theory and in practice. Yet, their notions in this regard are not considered to affect the actions of the *khawās* (the elite).

occasions. If there were any practices which were more than the actual action, I would speak out against them, and if they believed such superfluous practices to be essential, I clearly stated that they were *bid'ah*. At present I feel that the beliefs of some of them have become totally balanced, while the beliefs of others are close to becoming balanced. However, due to the fact that they have been engrossed in these practices for so long, I have no hope of such practices disappearing completely from their lives [old habits never die]. Had I not attended these functions, there would have been no hope whatsoever of them reaching this level of rectification and reformation in their condition. Thus, this was one reason for my participation.

My second reason for participation: I noticed that their attendance during lectures and talks was very weak, but they came in large numbers to these *majālis*. Furthermore, people of every inclination and from different backgrounds would attend. It thus provided me with an excellent opportunity to speak to them, advise them and rectify their beliefs and practices. Thousands of people repented from their corrupt beliefs and evil practices and became righteous believers. Many Shī'ahs became Sunnīs. Many who dealt in interest, alcoholics, people who never used to perform *ṣalāh* etc. reformed themselves. In short, my major participation comprised of admonishing them while, superficially, a general talk was delivered.

My third reason for participation: I realized it was not possible for me to remain there without participation. At the slightest show of disapproval, they would have labelled me a *Wahhābī* and they were prepared to disgrace and humiliate me, both verbally and physically. It is also not possible to provide excuses [for not attending] all the time. However, it is possible – and this is what I have been doing – to provide excuses ninety percent of the time and to participate ten percent of the time. My participation has always been with the purpose of guiding them. I used to think to myself: 'If

through my committing a *makrūh* act, the *farā'id* and *wājibāt* of other Muslims are safeguarded, there is hope that Allāh ﷻ will pardon me.'

Nevertheless, I considered it almost impossible to continue living there without participation. I wanted to continue living there because I was enjoying the material benefit of receiving a salary from the *madrasah*. By the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, I am not in the habit of accepting any payment for delivering a talk or a lecture etc. Even upon their insistence, I would refuse to accept any remuneration. However, I certainly do accept a salary for my services in the *madrasah*. As for the *Dīnī* benefit ... there was certainly *Dīnī* benefit in it. There is still *Dīnī* benefit in it. In fact, this benefit is clearly visible, because my teaching, educating, lecturing, advising, etc. still continues. I felt that I should continue living here so that I could continue acquiring these benefits. At the same time, it has become difficult for me to live here without participating in their *majālis*. That is why I decided to participate.

Notwithstanding all of these reasons and needs, if it were to be established – through authentic and clear proof – that my participation would earn the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ, I would have cast aside even a hundred thousand needs. By the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, I cast aside numerous monetary benefits for this very reason.

The reasons for my open-mindedness in this regard are outlined above. Nevertheless, I certainly consider these matters to be *khilāf-e-aulā* (not the ideal), but I see some leeway in them in view of the *Dīnī* benefits. At the same time, I also consider it *wājib* to rectify and reform the masses and continue with my efforts in this regard according to my ability.

Together with all this, there is one other point which is very complicated. If my participation is totally displeasing to Allāh ﷻ

and Rasūlullāh ﷺ, then, what is the explanation to A'lā Hadrat's explicit instruction? In fact, the masses are having doubts about their conviction, respect, bond and affinity for the 'ulamā'. In order to re-establish their link with the 'ulamā', I feel the Sharī'ah gives leeway for this participation. This is the gist of my thoughts and circumstances.

I now await Hadrat's instruction. If Hadrat says there is no leeway whatsoever in this, I will sever my employment immediately. The Absolute Provider is Allāh ﷻ. Nothing and no one else will help me on the Day of Resurrection.

However, in such a situation – what should my relationship with A'lā Hadrat be according to the Sharī'ah and in what light should I consider Hadrat's statements and actions? If there is a little leeway – either a general leeway or specifically related to my situation – I will not exceed the limits thereof. If you instruct me to conceal this, then, *inshā Allāh*, I will not attribute it to Hadrat for the rest of my life – neither with my tongue nor with my pen. In short, I will be most pleased to accept whatever Hadrat says. If I have any further doubts, I request Hadrat's permission to voice them without any hesitation.

The second issue: My contact with this person has caused people to have confidence in him.

I feared this on several occasions, but after giving it some thought, I realised that there are probably only two or three people who have developed confidence in him since my contact with him. Those who think good about me have no confidence in him. Those who were possibly influenced by him actually turned away from me, without thinking good of me. The majority of those who have confidence in him are those who had no general or special contact with me for any period of time.

When I ponder over the situation, I see many harms in announcing his 'unworthiness' in particular. First of all, the majority deny the fact that I had any contact with him because they have neither witnessed this, nor did they hear it from any reliable source. One or two unreliable and ignorant people have spoken about it, but the majority do not believe them. I have always concealed it. If I were to retract [openly announce my dissociation], it would mean that I admit having contact with him.

Secondly, since such an announcement may appear to belittle him, there is the possibility that more mischief and evil would spread in the wake of such an admission and we do not know what effect it would have on outsiders and insiders. I feel it would be more appropriate for me to write a letter to him, informing him of my dissociation. If he were to convey it to others, there would be no harm in it because, in such a case, I will be the one who is belittled. The possibility of harm only applies in the case where he is belittled. The manner of informing others should be to specify it without (publically) announcing it. If I do announce it, I will do so ambiguously [so that those who are aware of the situation will understand what I mean, and those who are ignorant of the situation will take the literal meaning] – without going into any detail. Furthermore, I will explain the general prerequisites for *bay'ah* in a public gathering by stating: 'If a person has the following qualifications, he is worthy of *bay'ah*. If not, he is not worthy of it.'

Thus, I have paid particular attention to both matters and intend doing more in this regard. I spoke about this subject in great detail last Friday. I listed the prerequisites for *bay'ah* and mentioned Hadrat's name as an example by saying: 'If a Shaykh has qualities like his, we ought to become his slaves. If not, we must keep away from those who do not possess such qualities.' I intend repeating this topic. As for mentioning the specifics ... I have mentioned it to some people and I still intend to mention it to a few more. In fact, I am concerned about even those who have developed confidence in

him of their own accord. I feel I should speak to them as well. I was successful on a few occasions in this regard. In fact, I feel I should write to the person himself and convey the truth to him. I also feel the need to make *du'ā'* in this regard.

In short, just as my contact with him had been established in secret, I should sever it in secrecy as well. Whatever announcement was made when I established this contact — the same level of announcement should be made when I sever it. In fact, in this way, the announcement will be a bit more [greater attention will be given to announcing the fact that I have severed my contact with him].

If this procedure is adopted, my objective will be fulfilled and there should be no *fitnah* either. If I should act differently, I foresee many complications. However, if this procedure is not considered sufficient according to the Sharī'ah and I have to suffer hardships and difficulties, I am prepared to suffer them for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ. If Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ are displeased with me, I am prepared to cast my life, wealth and honour aside in order to acquire the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

I have presented before Hadrat whatever is in my heart without any reservation. Hadrat may now ponder over all of this and also over what will be to my benefit in this world and the Hereafter — then order me to do whatever Hadrat feels would be best. Apart from Hadrat, I do not have total confidence in any 'ālim or Sufi in India. I do not consider anyone else to have my well-being at heart, nor do I have such confidence, love and respect for anyone else. I give preference to Hadrat's strictness over the affection of others. Although the fact that I am mentioning these matters could be considered as audacious, Allāh ﷻ is Witness to the fact that the pain in my heart has caused me to express myself in this way.

I am presently on leave at home, but cannot come to meet Hadrat because I feel I will not be able to express myself as openly as I did

in this letter. I intend returning to my *madrasah* on the 22nd. If Hadrat's reply is written by the 19th, I should be able to receive it here at home. If not, Hadrat may send it to the *madrasah*.

Finally, if I said anything against Hadrat's temperament [liking], I request Hadrat to forgive me. Hadrat may have been inconvenienced by my delay in replying to Hadrat's letter. I request Hadrat to pardon me for this.

With absolute respect, *was salām*.

That is all.

13 Dhū al-Hijjah 1314 A.H.

Imām Rabbānī's reply:

From the servant, Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, *may Allāh pardon him*, to Maulwī Muḥammad Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib, *may Allāh perpetuate his blessings*. As salāmu 'alaykum.

I received your reply to my previous letter. I did not have anyone to read it to me at the time and I did not consider it appropriate to show it to just anyone and everyone. Maulwī Muḥammad Siddīq Gangohī arrived here after some time, saw it by my head-side and expressed his desire to read it. Since he is also my confidant, I asked him to read it to me. However, I did not have the time to reply immediately. I was waiting for Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib to return from home. Thus, I left your letter aside. He has returned to Gangoh and today, the 2nd of Muḥarram, I am dictating this letter to him.

With regard to the first matter [mentioned in your last letter], there are two issues which are confusing you: (1) The methods of *ashghāl* (spiritual exercises) of the *mashā'ikh*, may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with them, and (2) Janāb Murshid's instruction [A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh] *may Allāh ﷻ give him long life*. I will now write on both these issues. Please consider what I say after

pondering and reflecting over it.

The first issue:

All the restrictions and specifications which are laid down by the *mashā'ikh* for the different *ashghāl* are not *bid'ah* in the least. The fact that you consider them to be models and standards (*maqīs 'alayh*) is most astonishing to me – especially from an intelligent person like yourself. My reason for saying this is: The acquisition of *nisbat* and turning one's attention to Allāh ﷻ are both commands which were given by Allāh ﷻ. Although there is a doubt about the status of this command, the lesser (weaker) proof is that it is *fard*, and the stronger proof is that it is *mandūb* (recommended by the Hadīth). This command is proven from countless verses of the Qur'ān and Aḥadīth. Not only Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but even Allāh ﷻ, made mention of this in numerous ways and contexts. In fact, the entire Sharī'ah – in essence – refers to this and the details thereof are so exhaustive that it is impossible to relate everything to you. If you were to ponder and reflect, you would conclude that every verse and every Hadīth proves it.

Thus, if an order is proven to such an extent, then any method which is identified for its acquisition, will also be an order. In every era and time, some of them will be more emphasized than others. There was a time when fasting, *ṣalāh*, Qur'ān recitation and the *adhkār* (forms of *dhikr*) which are mentioned in the Aḥadīth were sufficient for the acquisition of this [*nisbat* and turning one's attention to Allāh ﷻ]. Although the present *ashghāl*, with its present restrictions, were permissible at that time, there was no need for them.

After some time, the nature of the *nisbat* changed as the people's distance from the previous generations increased. Therefore, although they could still acquire their objective, it became difficult for them to do so. Consequently, the 'physicians' of the heart added a few restrictions and made some additions and subtractions to the

adhkār. It seemed as though the acquisition of the objective had become dependent on these restrictions. Therefore, this was not an innovation or a *bid'ah*. In fact, if someone were to consider them essential – he would be correct in thinking so. This is because we have been commanded to acquire the objective, but it had become difficult to acquire the objective without it. Thus, it is as though the restrictions themselves became the order – and thus not a *bid'ah*.

The next generation also underwent a change and again there was a need to update the approach – and this is the way in which it continued. For example, a doctor will prescribe a certain medicine during winter while the same medicine will not benefit the patient during summertime. In fact, it might prove to be harmful. The methods of treatment also change over the course of time. The types of treatment which were prevalent in our country a hundred years ago and the medical books which were written in the past are most certainly not adequate for today's needs. The changes which took place are in accordance with the original principles of medicine, even though they are different in their methods of treatment. That is why – in reality – we can not refer to this as a 'new invention'. Instead, it is considered to be an application of the original principles.

Another example is that of *i'lā' kalimatullāh* (elevating the Word of Allāh), which is referred to as *jihad*. If you should ponder over this, you will realise that arrows, spears, swords, and even rocks were adequate during the first era of Islam. You must have learnt this through reading the *Aḥadīth*. However, using those same weapons in today's times is absolutely harmful. It has now become *wājib* to use canons, guns and torpedoes, because it is impossible to acquire the objective of *i'lā' kalimatullāh* without them. No one can refer to these inventions as *bid'ah*, nor can anyone consider them *ḥarām* on the basis of *tashabbuh bil kuffār* (emulating the disbelievers). Instead, we will have to declare that they are *fard*, *wājib* and *ma'mūr bihi* (something which we are ordered to fulfil). The reason

being that the acquisition of the purpose has become dependent upon them. Thus, these inventions will also be *ma'mūr bihi*.

Now the same can be applied to the *ashghāl*. I am astounded as to how you can consider the *ashghāl* to be *maqīs 'alayh* (the models or standards by which other things are gauged) because the *maqīs 'alayh* is necessary and it is *ma'mūr bihi*. The most the *maqīs* can be, in this case, is *mubāh* (permissible).

Furthermore, the restriction [on attending the functions] is not related to a recommended act. On the contrary, some of the practices in it are *harām* and *makrūh*. Thus, if a person of your calibre makes *qiyās* of it based on the above, how can I not be astounded?

I therefore conclude from this *qiyās* of yours that you have not understood the meaning of *bid'ah* as yet. If only you had made a study of [the books] *Idāh al-Haqq as-Sarīh* or *Barāhīn-e-Qāṭi'ah*! Of course, I could say that your *nafs* deluded you or Shayṭān overpowered you into acting so rashly. I am sure that if you should ponder and reflect over the matter, you would realize and grasp your error.

The second issue:

Although – because of your extreme love and respect [for Hadrat Shaykh Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*] – you may dislike what I am going to say and you may consider me to be audacious and disrespectful, this will not prevent me from speaking the truth. I pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Shaykh [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib]. Many erudite '*ulamā*' pledged *bay'ah* at his hands in the past, and many others are still doing so. Although they were all '*ulamā*', they pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of a non-'*ālim* with this intention: Whatever they had learnt in their books under the tutelage of their teachers, and whatever (academic) knowledge they had acquired, they needed to convert all that knowledge into '*ilm*

al-yaqīn (absolute knowledge) at the hands of a *Shaykh-e-‘ārif* so that it could become easy for them to put their knowledge into practice and so that the *ma‘lūm* (knowledge) can be converted into *mash-hūd* (witnessed in practice) according to their capabilities.

In the past, none of us had pledged *bay‘ah* at his hands – and no one pledges *bay‘ah* at his hands at present – so that we may suspend the authenticity or non-authenticity of whatever we had studied to a non-‘*ālim* *Shaykh*. Neither do we adjust the established injunctions of the Qur‘ān and Hadīth according to his opinion – in the sense that we consider wrong what he says is wrong, and right what he says is right. Such thoughts are absolute *bātil* (false and baseless).

Thus, if someone’s *Shaykh* issues an order which is against the order of the Sharī‘ah, it will not be permissible for him to accept it. In fact, it will be *wājib* upon the *murīd* to correct him because each one has rights over the other and the *Shuyūkh* (plural of *Shaykh*) are not *ma‘ṣūm*. When a *Shaykh* attempts to convince his *murīd* about an issue which is clearly against the order of the Sharī‘ah through absolute Shar‘ī proofs, it is totally impermissible for the *murīd* to accept that order. There are numerous examples of this in the Ahādīth. I will present just one example to you. Ponder over it!

In the battle against Musaylamah, many *huffāz* were martyred and Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ feared the loss of much of the Qur‘ān. Thus, he advised Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ to compile the Qur‘ān into book form. After some further discussions, Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ eventually accepted Hadrat ‘Umar’s ؓ advice and was convinced of the desirability of such an action. They both agreed upon the matter and, not only were they convinced of its *sunnīyyat* (it being in accordance with the Sunnah), but of its *wujūb* (it being *wājib*). They then asked Zayd ibn Thābit ؓ to take up this task – although they were both superior to him in knowledge and rank, and despite the fact that they had enjoyed a longer period of companionship

with Rasūlullāh ﷺ than him. Furthermore, Rasūlullāh ﷺ had made a general announcement with regard to Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat 'Umar ؓ:

اقتدوا بالذين من بعدي أبي بكر وعمر، رواه البخاري

"Follow those who are going to come after me [who are going to be my deputies] – Abū Bakr and 'Umar."

(Narrated by Bukhārī)

Zayd ؓ considered this act to be *muhdath* (something new to Islam). Thus, despite the superior position which these two Companions ؓ enjoyed, he asked them:

كيف تفعلون شيئاً لم يفعله رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

"How can you do something which Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not do?"

Zayd ؓ flatly refused to listen to them because, to initiate something new and a *bid'ah*, was severely abhorred by him. He did not consider Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat 'Umar ؓ to be *ma'sūm* and therefore he debated the issue with them. However, once they explained to him, and the *sunnīyyat* of this act became clear to Zayd ؓ, he accepted it wholeheartedly and became engrossed in carrying out their order. You have personally studied and taught *Bukhārī* – What more can I write?

Thus, to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of a Shaykh in such a way that one is rendered unable to differentiate between the lawful and the prohibited, does not befit the '*ulamā*'.

لا طاعة للمخلوق في معصية الخالق

"Obedience to the creation is not lawful

if it entails disobedience to the Creator."

The above order is general and applies to everyone. No one is excluded from this. If any '*ālim* did this, he may have done it out of extreme or insane love [admiration for his Shaykh]. It is not worthy of consideration and we do not consider ourselves to be of such a calibre (having such intense love and thus being excluded). The following is said about such people: "They are coloured by the dye of love."

You must have heard about the story of Shaykh Naṣīr ad-Dīn Chirāgh Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* who used to remain aloof from the *majlis* of Sultān al-Mashā'ikh *rahimahullāh* saying: "The actions of the *mashā'ikh* is not (in the category of proof of) the Sunnah." When Sultān al-Mashā'ikh *rahimahullāh* heard this, he said: 'Naṣīr ad-Dīn is correct.'

What you wrote is very intricate and this much is sufficient in reply to it. It is for this reason that the *mashā'ikh* used to inquire about the *masā'il* of Dīn from those *murīds* who were '*ulamā'* – and they still do this. If any of their *ma'mūlāt* was against the Sharī'ah, they used to repent.

Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] relates a story in *Ghidhā'-e-Rūh* of an '*ārif*' who used to live in a cave. He used to place cakes of candle wax in his eyes and an impure wick in his mouth. Hadrat writes that one of his *murīds* informed him that his *ṣalāh* would not be valid if it is performed in such a state. The '*ārif*' accepted this ruling from his *murīd* and repeated every *ṣalāh* which he had performed in this condition.

I can personally quote many incidents in this regard. Initially, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Hāfiz [Dāmin] Sāhib used to ask *masā'il* from Maulwī Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib, whereafter they would practise upon whatever he told them to do. Thereafter they asked

me for *masā'il* and gave up many of the things which they were doing. Hāfiz Sāhib once said the following in my presence: 'We were wrong on many *masā'il* for a very long time.'

Since the beginning of my companionship [with A'lā Hadrat], I have possessed many bad habits and am devoid of extreme love and respect. A'lā Hadrat's instruction to you was given in order to affirm the statements of some *murīds* who possess little, or are devoid of understanding. Due to the fact that some *murīds* wrongly attribute things to their Shaykh, let me clarify that he has understood correctly on the basis of *husn-e-zann*. Thus, I do not accept his instruction [to you]. Rather, I excuse him and consider him free of error in this regard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

قال عليه الصلوة والسلام من أفتى بغير علم فإثمه على من أفتاه

*"The person who issues a fatwā without knowledge, the sin of it will be on the person who issued the fatwā."*³⁶

Thus, I consider [A'lā] Hadrat to be excused and consider those people who have ulterior motives to be sinners, deviated, guilty of deviating others and guilty of acquiring material profits behind the veil of *Dīn*. I take an oath upon Allāh, I most certainly do not consider you to be such. Instead, that which you experienced was due to your extreme love. Thus, I also consider you to be excused in this regard and I make *du'ā'* for your well-being. Although I am complaining, my complaint is out of love for you. We complain about our own people and not about outsiders. The reply to the first matter ends here.

Regarding the second matter: I am not going to interfere with all the

³⁶ This means that A'lā Hadrat was excused and error-free in this regard because he was acting on the *fatwā* of some other muftī. Thus, the sin of this is on that muftī and not on A'lā Hadrat. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

plans and tactics which you have mentioned. You may do whatever you feel appropriate. It is our duty to free the people from the clutches of a *mubtadi'* (one engrossed in *bid'ah*) – regardless of how we do it. However, we have to abstain from severity which could lead to dissension.

I was most pleased upon hearing about your talks and lectures which you delivered in Thānābhawan during this trip. I make *du'ā'* for your well-being. That is all.

If you have any misgiving regarding anything which I have written in this letter, you have my permission to express it. Do not feel shy in the least. I will never be displeased.

If I committed any mistake, *inshā Allāh*, I will have no hesitation in acknowledging it, provided that I have been clearly understood.
5 Muharram al-Harām.

Third letter from Hadrat Thānwī :

From the worst of the *khādims*, Muḥammad Ashraf 'Alī, to the one who is an embodiment of blessings, the guide of those who are in pain, the one who leads those who are lost – Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Hāfiẓ al-Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib, may *Allāh* ﷻ perpetuate his blessings. As salāmu 'alaykum.

I received your beloved letter and it was an honour and privilege to receive it. It provided direction to this immature and worthless person. Even if I were to thank you with every breath, it would be impossible for me to thank you fully.

I was especially delighted and pleased by your loving and affectionate words. I probably never experienced such joy before this. May *Allāh* ﷻ enable us to continue benefiting from Hadrat.

Since Hadrat permitted me to seek further explanations from Hadrat, I respectfully present some of my thoughts with the purpose of satisfying myself.

The first matter:

I fully understood Hadrat's explanation with regard to the first matter. However, one doubt remains. It is possible to consider the *maqīs* to be a means of fulfilling an order. In other words, we are certainly ordered to remember Rasūlullāh ﷺ and to have love and respect for him. In the past, there was a lot of discussion regarding this because of the intense love for him. The hearts were also filled with love and respect for him. Later on, some people became neglectful in this regard. The *Muhaddithūn* (Hadīth scholars) – *may Allāh ﷻ have Mercy on them* – compiled books on his character, features, miracles, merits etc., in order to fulfil this objective [to create love and respect for Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the hearts of the believers].

Thereafter, these very same topics and subjects were collectively spoken about from the mimbars. A few restrictions and specifications were then added in order (1) to make it easier to act upon them, (2) to create a yearning in the hearts of the listeners, (3) to express joy and happiness, (4) to create respect and honour for the *dhikr* and (5) to create respect and honour for Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Although the sole objective remained the acquisition of love and respect for Rasūlullāh ﷺ, its acquisition was not dependent [conditional] on a specific form – in the sense that it would become rationally impossible to acquire it if that specific form was not present. However, this dependence [or precondition] cannot be found in the *maqīs 'alayh*. Even there, the 'precondition' is in the meaning of 'consequence' or in the sense that it would – under normal circumstances – be impossible to acquire it, if that form was not found.

Therefore this leeway is found in the *maqīs* as well, because its

'consequence' is obvious. If we ponder over it, the prohibition is general, although there is a slight difference when applied to the two – that is to say, the prohibition in the *maqīs 'alayh* is on the basis of the majority of people, while in the *maqīs* it is on the basis of some people. Thus, we see in the east that, because of an overpowering prevalence of blasphemy and atheism, or ignorance and negligence, the majority would flee from attending a lecture. Yet, either because of the status of the host, or for some other reason, they attend these *mahāfil* (gatherings) wherein the merits and features of Rasūlullāh ﷺ are described and, together with this, they hear some beliefs and injunctions of the Sharī'ah. I have witnessed many people coming onto the true path in this way. If they did not attend such gatherings, their entire lives may have passed without their hearing anything about the fundamentals of Islam and its subsidiary injunctions.

If we were to disregard the 'dependence', the 'consequence' would certainly be established. Thus, this also seems sufficient evidence to consider it permissible. Hadrat stated in the last letter: 'Although the *ashghāl* with the present restrictions were permissible, there was no need for them.' We learn from this that – if something is a means to fulfilling an order – whether it is essential or not, it is considered to be permissible. It is clear that it is a means, because the hearts of the audience certainly appear to be filled with respect, honour, love and yearning for Rasūlullāh ﷺ at such a time. Obviously, it is *wājib* to desist from the *makrūh* and *harām* issues which have interpolated these gatherings. Consequently, I have always abstained from them and will continue doing so. I have gone into great detail to rectify some of their wrongs. I have done this over several months in my lectures. Some people have recorded these in brief and have published it. I am attaching these for Hadrat's perusal.

By the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, everyone has accepted these rectifications and the majority have put it into practice. Many reprehensible

(*makrūh*) aspects which needs to be rectified have become included in the *maqīs 'alayh*. *Inshā Allāh*, I hope to write a book on this subject in the near future. I will send it to Hadrat for the purpose of corrections. I hope for your *du'ā's*, because a lot of deviation is spreading through ignorant Sufis. I have not yet fully understood the difference between the *maqīs* and *maqīs 'alayh*. I checked the definition of *bid'ah* in *Barāhīn-e-Qāti'ah*. *Mā shā Allāh*, it is absolutely correct and I agree with it. *Inshā Allāh*, I will bear it in mind in all my discussions.

The second matter:

With regards to obedience to the *shuyūkh – al-hamdulillāh*, my belief was never in conflict with what you have mentioned. If something is unlawful, it can never become lawful merely because a Shaykh said so.

I have full *īmān* and conviction in:

لا طاعة للمخلوق في معصية الخالق

*"Obedience to the creation is not lawful
if it entails disobedience to the Creator."*

However, I certainly think that, if there is an issue which is disputed (*mukhtalaf fihi*) and a *Shaykh-e-kāmil* instructs one to do one of the two, then it is at least permissible to obey him – as long as three conditions are met:

(1) There is the prospect of differences on the issue on the basis of *Shar'ī* proofs and principles. (2) Although the Shaykh is not a *hākim* (legislator) by definition, he possesses effulgence of the heart, confidence and sound understanding, which would cause one to assume that he has the skill to give preference to one ruling over the other. This is especially the case when both conflicting views are presented to the Shaykh, the proofs of both sides are provided to him and then he gives preference to one view over the other. (3)

The *murīd* must also be convinced, either by evidence or actions, of the Shaykh.

I consider all three conditions to be present in the issue under discussion. That is: (1) since a large group consider it to be permissible, it appears to be a disputed issue. (2) I most certainly feel that Hadrat Shaykh [Hājī Imdādullāh] is in possession of sufficient intelligence to be able to give preference to one view over the other after both views have been presented to him.

Although Hadrat Shaykh has good thoughts about those who consider it lawful, I have personally seen that he does not consider anyone of them to be equal to Hadrat in Hadrat's acceptance [in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ], intelligence and juristic acumen. He refers to Hadrat in various phrases of praise, such as: 'He is one of the greatest Bounties of Allāh ﷻ, a great boon and an unparalleled personality in India.' He also says: 'All his rulings and *fatāwā* are based solely on *lillāhīyyat* (for the sake of Allāh ﷻ Alone and by the Approval of Allāh ﷻ).' From this we can gather that Hadrat, himself, is satisfied and convinced about this issue and that he insists upon it. At the same time, he does not refute the opposing view. The addressee [Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] is satisfied with Hadrat's view. In view of all this, I still consider it lawful to obey him. I have expressed what is in my heart.

I have endeavoured not to allow a tone of 'debating' to creep into this entire presentation of mine. My sole purpose is to benefit from Hadrat and to take counsel (*mashwarah*) from Hadrat. If a [tone of debating] has inadvertently crept in, I have full hope in Hadrat's noble character and pardoning nature to forgive me on the basis of *إنما الأعمال بالنيات* (actions are judged according to intentions). I am just as pleased by Hadrat's complaint which was expressed with love. Just as Allāh ﷻ had brought the Banī Maslamah and Banī Hārithah together by revealing the verse:

وَإِذْ هَمَّتْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيَهُمَا

"And (remember) when the two groups from amongst you intended to cause division (by separating from each other). And Allāh is the Guardian of both (groups)."

I make *du'ā'* that Allāh ﷻ will guide wandering people like us through Hadrat's blessings. *Inshā Allāh*, I will make special efforts. Please help me with your *du'ā's*. Hadrat expressed his happiness over the *mawā'iz* (talks) which I sent. I say with full sincerity that I consider Hadrat's happiness to be a proof of acceptance and a means of salvation. I make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ that Hadrat will not become displeased with me – even when I err – but that Hadrat will draw my attention to my error. The scribe [who wrote Hadrat's letter] is most probably Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib. Kindly convey my *salām* to him. If it is someone else [who wrote the letter], kindly inform me who it is, because I could not recognize his identity from the writing.

Everything else is going well. Was *salām*.
Written from Kānpūr,
Thursday, 8 Muḥarram al-Ḥarām, 1315 A.H.

Imām Rabbānī's reply:

From Rashīd Aḥmad, *may Allāh pardon him*. As-salāmu 'alaykum. I received your letter and am astonished at your equating the *maqīs* with the *maqīs 'alayh*. However, when the saying حبك الشيء يعمي (love for a thing causes one to become blind and deaf) is applied, it is not at all far-fetched to experience such doubts and misgivings.

The first issue:

Now observe carefully: The *maqīs 'alayh* is the *dhikr* in itself,

because it is one entity of the general *dhikr* which is *ma'mūr bihi* (which we are ordered to engage in). As for the observations and forms which it takes ... they are either the *dhikr*, or those matters which have a basis in the texts [Qur'ān and Sunnah]. Thus, they are *mulḥaq bis Sunnah* (attached to the Sunnah). These matters have certainly been confined to certain restrictions for the realization of the objective [attaining love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ]. Let alone the masses – even from among the learned there are just a few people who are acting upon it. Therefore, the masses would not necessarily understand it. As for some of the restrictions of the *majlis* which are imposed for the *maqīs* ... they appear to be *shirk* (polytheism). There are other aspects which are essentially *mubāh* (permissible) but, because their proliferation has corrupted both the masses and the elite, they are considered to be *bid'ah* and therefore unlawful. The masses consider them to be, not only essential, but *wājib*. The influence which the masses have over these *maulūd* gatherings is not enjoyed by the learned. The above-mentioned un-promulgated (*ghayr mashrū'ah*) restrictions are most certainly not essentials for the demonstration of love [for Rasūlullāh ﷺ]. You acknowledge this yourself. Thus, it has no likeness with the *maqīs 'alayh*.

The motive for calling the masses to listen to the *dhikr* will only be permissible if it is not accompanied by any Shar'ī prohibition. In most cases, it is singing and dancing which are the motives, and fabricated narrations are by and large considered to be the causes of love. Thus, can any intelligent person consider this to be permissible by using 'inviting the masses' [enjoining good] as a reason or excuse? This is a reply to your explanation in which you stated that, by speaking about the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in a particular manner [described above], you consider it to be a cause of increase in their love for him and you are thus giving permission to acquire love through unlawful means. Whereas, in reality, if any good is acquired through an unlawful means, then it is unlawful in itself. From what I have witnessed, those who listen to the *maulūd* and are enamoured by the *maulūd* gatherings, are in the hundreds,

but not a single one from among them emulates and loves the Sunnah. He may attend the *maulūd* throughout his life, but love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ and love for his Sunnah does not develop in his heart in the least. Instead, he is filled with absolute disregard for acts of worship and the Sunnah.

If we were to accept that your *mīlād* gathering is devoid of all evils and that there is no unlawful matter in it, all the other [*mīlād*] gatherings throughout the world are totally unlawful. This action of yours [holding a *mīlād* without any unlawful matter] is actually giving support to their gatherings. Thus, if this *mandūb* (permissible) act of yours is a cause of deviating others, how can we say that it is permissible? If Allāh ﷻ Blessed you with an impartial eye, everything will be clear to you. If not, one can resort to numerous rationalizations, misgivings and objections. The *ahl-e-haqq* (those who are on the truth) have refuted the false creeds continually, but their misgivings will not end till the Resurrection. That is all.

The second issue:

Now listen to what I say about the second issue. Five or six years ago, Hadrat A'lā [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] was of the same opinion and made the statement: 'The *dhikr* in itself is permissible, but the restrictions surrounding it are *bid'ah*.' Such writings are still in existence. However, after further investigation by those who considered it permissible, you wrote the gist of it in *Haft Mas'alah*, stating that Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] considered both views – those who permit it and those who prohibit it – to be correct, whereas the principle is that, when the *mujtahids* differ on a subsidiary issue, then – in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ – one is correct and the other is wrong. Thus, if a *Sāhib-e-kashf* considers one view to be correct according to his *kashf*, he cannot consider the opposing view to be correct. This is because on the basis of *kashf*, only one view can be correct.

What then is the meaning of considering both to be correct and then giving preference to one? It can only mean that he had seen 'ulamā' on both sides, considered the issue to be a disputed issue (*mukhtalaf fīhi*) and thought it to be a subsidiary issue (*mas'alah far'īyyah*). However, this issue is an *i'tiqādī mas'alah* (an issue concerning beliefs), even though it may – at first glance – seem to be a subsidiary issue. We know that when it comes to issues that concern beliefs, there can only be one view that is correct. Even outwardly – as in the case with internally – if those who are following their whims have a large number of 'ulamā' within their ranks, we will not look at this large number [of 'ulamā'] and we will not consider it to be a disputed issue. Hadrat A'lā [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] has personally written the reason for giving preference to one view. You are writing with your own pen that he did not even consider these restrictions to be *bid'ah* because he says: '*Bid'ah* means introducing into the *Dīn* something which is not part of *Dīn*.' Then he quotes this Hadīth as proof:

من أحدث في أمرنا هذا

“Whoever introduces an innovation in this affair (religion) of ours, then it is rejected.”

From this it is clear that his giving preference to one view is not based on *kashf*.

As for question whether A'lā Hadrat's preference of one view is correct or not ... I am not going to write that. Although the basis for his decision is correct, it is not correct to apply that same basis to this subsidiary issue. If you ponder over this, it will become clear to you.

I am astonished that you consider this issue to be a disputed issue (*mukhtalaf fīhā wa mujtahad fīhā*). A disputed issue appears to be correct either way when the dispute is among the *mujtahid mutlaq*,

mujtahid muqayyad and the '*ulamā*' *rāsikhīn mulhaq bihim*. But, when there is a dispute between the masses and the '*ulamā*', the issue is not considered to be a disputed issue at all. Instead, only one side is correct – the view which is in accordance with the *Sharī'ah* – and the other view is false. That is all.

If I were to say that whatever I wrote here, I wrote on the basis of *kashf*, it would be correct, but I cannot utter such a thing. Since you – due to your good thoughts – are convinced to the contrary, I do not expect you to benefit, regardless of whether anyone writes this or not. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that I have not come across a single person from those who observe *maulūd* who is a strict adherent of the *Sunnah*. That is all.

Was salām.

Dated 12 Muharram 1315 A.H.

Fourth letter from Hadrat Thānwī:

"From the most insignificant creature, Muḥammad Ashraf 'Alī, may Allāh pardon him, to the embodiment of blessings, Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib, may Allāh perpetuate his blessings.

It was a great honour and privilege to receive your letter. I am most ashamed over Hadrat's constant efforts to make me understand despite my wayward thinking and, due to this shame, I do not have the courage to present anything further. However, I did present my doubts in my previous letter after I had obtained permission from Hadrat to do so. The following statement of Hadrat in his last letter: "And since you – due to your good thoughts – are convinced of the contrary, I do not expect you to benefit, regardless of whether anyone writes this or not," gives me the impression that Hadrat is displeased with me.

اعوذ بالله من غضب الله وغضب رسول الله وغضب ورثة رسول الله صلى

اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

*"I seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ from Allāh's Wrath,
Rasūlullāh's ﷺ wrath
and the wrath of the inheritors ['ulamā'] of Rasūlullāh ﷺ."*

Consequently, I could not pluck up the courage to say anything further. Several days passed with these thoughts mulling through my mind and I eventually came to the conclusion that:

إنما شفاء العي السؤال

"Asking and questioning is the remedy for inability."

How can my heart be cleared if I were to let the matter rest? It crossed my mind that it had been due to my shame that I had developed all these doubts and misgivings. Had I displayed some bravery at the very beginning, I would not have reached my present state. This gave me the courage to say something again. At the same time I request that, if anything I say should cause Hadrat the slightest displeasure, Hadrat must clearly say it to me without any hesitation. I will – *inshā Allāh* – obey Hadrat without demanding any further proof. I consider my relationship with Hadrat just as a *muqallid* considers his relationship with a *mujtahid*. If Hadrat permits, I will say something:

I can say under oath that I neither have any love for this action nor am I absorbed in it. On the contrary – I consider it better and more virtuous to cast it aside and give it up. Consequently, because of similar issues, I no longer give any importance to the *jalsah-e-dastār bandī* (graduation ceremony). I also wrote an article in this regard and had it published. However, the general situation over here is such that it is extremely difficult to oppose them and such opposition would cause much agitation and trouble.

On such occasions, all types of people listen to the *mawā'iz* – which makes it easy to rectify the evils which are in them. Bearing in mind these benefits, I used to attend such gatherings, provided it is considered 'permissible to attend. It is for this reason that I presented whatever doubts and misgivings I had. My objective is solely to find a cure and I am confident that, by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, such a cure will be achieved quickly. As for those who are fanatical and dogmatic ... it is not their objective to find out the truth. Therefore, their entire lives will pass without them ever learning the truth.

After every *ṣalāh* I make this *du'ā'*:

إهدنا الصراط المستقيم الخ،
ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا الخ، اللهم أرنا الحق حقا الخ

I sit in solitude and think to myself: "What is the truth?" Apart from having a quest (*ṭalab*), turning to Allāh ﷻ and asking the erudite '*ulamā'* – what else can I do? The rest is in the Control of Allāh ﷻ. *Taubah! Taubah!* What am I and of what value is my being convinced about an issue? How can I ever doubt *Hadrat's kashf* when I fully believe in *Hadrat's* merits? I concur with your explanations with my heart and soul. However, I still have something to ask on the basis of the *Hadīth*:

إنما شفاء العي السؤال

"Asking and questioning is the remedy for inability."

With regard to the second matter: I am fully convinced that we will never be able to know A'lā *Hadrat* [*Hājī Imdādullāh Ṣāhib*] as well as you know him. I will merely be annoying you if I were to go into details in this regard. It is thus just the first matter which remains.

There is certainly this much difference between the *maqīs* and *maqīs 'alayh*: Even among the learned, those who are practising on the *maqīs 'alayh* are in the minority – even though the claimants have spread stories to the contrary among the ignorant masses, and that too, while they are practicing on incorrect beliefs. Regardless, it is not as widespread as the *maqīs*. It is also known that from amongst those who practise on the *maqīs*, there are very few who adhere to the Sunnah, although this is due to the fact that they are taught incorrectly by their speakers. No matter what – they are certainly in the minority.

When anything good is acquired through impermissible means, it is not considered to be good. When it is ascertained that impermissible restrictions have been imposed, then, no matter what the outcome, it will not be permissible to acquire them. It is also obvious that these evil gatherings are held in abundance and, if an evil is supported by something which is not evil, it should also be abandoned if it is not considered to be essential according to the Shari'ah.

At present, there are two questions which are worthy of being discussed:

Is a general restriction altogether prohibited, or is it prohibited only when the restriction is considered on a general level? In other words, if the *mutlaq* was *wājib*, would the restriction also be considered *wājib*? Also, if it was *mandūb* and a means of gaining proximity, would the restriction also be considered *mandūb* and a means of gaining proximity?

In the first case, one can be excused for having misgivings with regard to general restrictions. In the second case, however, when the *mutlaq* is considered to be a form of worship and the restriction is considered to be a habit for the sake of expediency – then, in itself, there will be no harm in it. Yes, if it could lead to corrupting the beliefs of the masses, it would certainly be harmful due to

external factors. However, if the doer continually rectifies the beliefs of the masses by means of his tongue, will this harm remain or not? If it will not remain – well and good. If, however, this harm will remain, then my doubt and misgiving will apply to such actions, because there are some actions which are spreading amongst the masses which appear to have caused excesses in their beliefs. These are supported by the learned, through their actions, statements and instructions and there is no Shar'ī proof which establishes that these actions are *wājib*. They are corrupting, not only the masses, but some learned as well.

For example, *taqlīd-e-shakhsī* (following one particular imām) is spreading among the masses. They consider it so essential that, even if a non-*muqallid's* beliefs are in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah, they harbour extreme hatred towards him. So much so, that they do not even harbour such extreme hatred towards the *fāsiqs* and *fājirs* who do not perform *ṣalāh*. The actions of the '*ulamā*' and their *fatwā* of *wujūb* [that *taqlīd* is *wājib*] provides further support to this view, even though they may not be so dogmatic in this regard. The proof for this is that they enter into debates and arguments with those who abandon *taqlīd*, whereas such arguments are prohibited. Thus, that which leads to the prohibited, will also be prohibited and its opposite will be *wājib*. Yet we see that, because of the different views of the '*ulamā*' and the many opinions voiced by one particular *madh-hab* – let alone the masses – even the '*ulamā*' engage in debates and arguments amongst themselves. Great unity is found among the non-*muqallids*. In short, there is unity and dissension on both sides.

This results in certain harms. The majority of the *muqallids* – from amongst the masses and the '*ulamā*' – become so dogmatic that, if they were to hear a Qur'ānic verse or *Hadīth* which is in conflict with the opinion of the *mujtahid*, their hearts do not experience any delight and joy. Instead, their hearts elicit a negative response at first. Then they think about rationalizing – no matter how far-

fetches it may be and no matter how strong the opposing proof may be. The proof of the *mujtahid* may be nothing but *qiyās* on a particular issue and the person may not be fully convinced of the rationalization himself, but he will consider the rationalization essential for the sake of supporting his *madh-hab*. His heart cannot succumb to leaving the opinion of the *mujtahid* aside and acting upon the authentic and explicit Hadīth.

People are prepared to argue and lock horns over some *Sunnahs* which are disputed — for example, saying *āmīn* aloud [after *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* in *ṣalāh*]. This was not widespread in the first three centuries. Instead, (at that time) a person would ask anyone about a ruling. Although there is *ijmā'* that it is not permissible to initiate a fifth *madh-hab* by casting aside the four *madhāhib* — in other words, it is not permissible to act on an issue if it is against all four *madhāhib*, because the correct way of acting is confined to these four — there is no proof for this either, because the *ahl-e-zāhir* has been prevalent in every era [thus, *ijmā'* cannot be established]. Furthermore, it is also not possible for every single person to be qualified [for *ijmā'*] and an unqualified person will thus be excluded from this *ijmā'*.

The other point is that, even if *ijmā'* can be established, there was never any *ijmā'* for *taqlīd-e-shakhsī*. However, *talfīz* was considered impermissible in one incident to prevent it from going against *ijmā' murakkab*. Despite all this, the desirability and compulsion (*wujūb*) of *taqlīd shakhsī* is well-known and practised upon. Now, how will the reprehensibility of this be removed? The other point is: How can our subject under discussion be considered an *i'tiqādī mas'alah* (an issue concerning beliefs) when it appears to be a subsidiary and practical issue (*far'ī 'amalī*)?

I would like to inquire about two more issues:

(1) What is the limit and boundary of *tashabbuh* (emulation) — which is prohibited? Some spiritual practices such as holding the

breath etc. [when engaging in *dhikr*] are practised by the Hindus. The *anrakhā* (a long coat worn by men) is also worn by Hindus. When a person bids farewell to the Ka'bah, he is required to walk backwards. This entails restricting this act to a particular place and time. Furthermore, Hindu women walk in this way when they leave their temples.

(2) If a person imposes upon himself something which he was not supposed to impose upon himself and he believes it to be *wājib* when it is in fact not *wājib*, then it becomes prohibited. Does the same rule apply if a person does something with consistency, or does it with great caution?

One *Sahābī* ؓ used to adhere strictly to the recitation of *Qul huwallāhu ahad*. Rasūlullāh ؐ asked him:

ما حملك على لزوم هذه السورة

“What causes you to adhere to this *sūrah* in this way?”

When he gave his reason, Rasūlullāh ؐ did not stop him from reading it in the manner in which he used to. This is a *taqrīrī* (affirmative) proof that it is permissible to adhere strictly to a particular action [which is not promulgated as such].

Inshā Allāh, once these doubts and misgivings have been cleared, I hope not to trouble *Hadrat* anymore. I very respectfully request *Hadrat* to pardon my audacity. What else can I do? Allāh ؐ knows, I have lost hope in everyone else and have turned to *Hadrat*. If *Hadrat* also causes me to lose hope, where will I go? Shaytān will then deceive me and instruct me to make *ijtihad*. I will then be destroyed. May Allāh ؐ protect you and bless you with well-being. *Āmīn*.

I just received some very sad news. A *hājī* just returned yesterday

and brought a letter to me from an acquaintance of mine. He writes that Hāfīz Hājī Aḥmad Husayn Sāhib – the *amīn al-hujjāj* (the person in whose hands *hājīs* used to leave their goods for safekeeping) – had passed away on the 13th of Dhū al-Hijjah 1314 A.H.

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون، اللهم ارحمهم رحمة واسعة

I am most saddened by this for several reasons: (1) His passing away itself. (2) Because of the great service he used to render to the *hājīs*. (3) Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] will now be lonely. (4) I am thinking of his little children: (5) May there be no problems in returning the goods which were placed in his trust.

By Allāh's Grace, A'lā Hadrat is well. May Allāh ﷻ perpetuate his blessings. If Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib – Hadrat's scribe – and Maulwī Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib are present, please convey my *salāms* to them.

Written from Kānpūr.

18 Muḥarram 1315 A.H.

Imām Rabbānī's reply:

From Rashīd Aḥmad, may Allāh ﷻ pardon him. As-salāmu 'alaykum.

I received your letter. It seems you have accepted whatever I wrote previously, but you have some doubt because of *taqlīd shakhsī*. I am dictating the answer to it.

If a matter is confined to *mubāh* and the *mubāh* does not go beyond its bounds, or it does not put the masses into any danger [of getting involved in evils], then it would be permissible. However, if either of the above-mentioned two [situations] takes place, it would be impermissible. You, yourself, accept this preliminary point.

Now listen to what I say about *taqlīd*. We are ordered to observe unrestricted (*muṭlaq*) *taqlīd*, based on the following verse:

فاسئلوا أهل الذكر إن كنتم لا تعلمون

... as well as other verses and Aḥādīth. However, after some time, some ills and evils started cropping up because of *taqlīd ghayr shakhsī*. It leads to a person becoming unconcerned about his *Dīn*, which inevitably leads to him following his own desires and whims and it results in him criticizing the 'ulamā' *mujtahidīn* and the *Sahābah* ر. These factors also result in mutual disputes. If you look deeply into these points, you will realize that they are the consequences of *taqlīd ghayr shakhsī* and it will become clear to you that it is the cause. Because of this disorganization, it is as if *taqlīd ghayr shakhsī* has been prohibited by Allāh ﷻ. Thus, it is as if *taqlīd shakhsī* has been made a *fard*.

The reason being that *Taqlīd ma'mūr bihi* (*taqlīd* which we have been ordered to observe) has two categories, namely *shakhsī* and *ghayr shakhsī*. *Taqlīd* itself is now in the category of a genus (*jins*) and, because of its *muṭlaq* (general nature), it cannot exist except if a *fard* (one individual aspect) still remains.

Thus, if *ghayr shakhsī* is *ḥarām* because of the essential harms contained in it [as mentioned previously], *shakhsī* would now become *mu'ayyan* (specified) and *ma'mūr bihi* (commanded). If anything is declared as *fard* by Allāh ﷻ and some ill or harm develops in it and it is not possible to acquire that *fard* except through that individual thing (aspect), then that aspect will not become *ḥarām* but in fact, it will be compulsory (*wājib*)-to remove that ill.

On the other hand, if there are two individual aspects (*ghayr shakhsī* and *shakhsī*) and there is a harm in one (for example in *ghayr shakhsī*), but the other is safeguarded (that is *shakhsī*), then

this aspect (*shakhṣī*) will specifically be *ma'mūr bihi* (commanded).

If, in practicing on, there is now some obstacle (impediment), it becomes compulsory (*wājib*) to remove that obstacle or impediment. This is the reason why *taqlīd shakhṣī* is compulsory (*wājib*) and why the *Fuqahā'* have written that *ghayr shakhṣī* is forbidden.

If an 'ālim does not fall into those ills and harms by observing *ghayr shakhṣī*, nor does he become a cause of agitation among the masses because of it; then *taqlīd ghayr shakhṣī* will be permissible for him even today. However, we will have to observe that *taqlīd shakhṣī* and *ghayr shakhṣī* are two categories [or divisions] of *taqlīd* in the sense that *taqlīd* cannot exist without these two, and these two (*shakhṣī* and *ghayr shakhṣī*) are inseparable from it. This situation of *taqlīd* is thus different from the *quyūd* (restrictions) which are observed in a *mīlād* gathering. Outwardly they may appear to be the same, but if you ponder over it, the difference will become clear.

Dhikr-e-wilādat (speaking about the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) is a separate matter altogether. However, the laying of carpets, decorations, lights and some other restrictions which we are currently examining, does not fall into the same category as *dhikr-e-wilādat*. In fact, they are superfluous matters without which the *dhikr-e-wilādat* can be fulfilled. It is therefore not correct to make *qiyās* (analogical deduction) of one on the other.

Together with this, from the aforementioned principle, we have learnt the condition of a superfluous *mubāh* act – that is to say, as long as it is within its boundaries, it is permissible. Once it goes beyond its limits, it becomes impermissible. If just a single aspect of a whole is impermissible, the ruling of impermissibility is passed on the whole. You know that if something contains *halāl* and *harām* aspects, the verdict of *harām* is passed on the whole. This is

a juristic principle. I hope my explanation answers the lengthy argument which you wrote on the issue of *taqlīd*. There is no need to go into too many details because you can understand it by yourself.

You asked how this issue becomes an issue of *aqā'id*. Ponder over what I say: It is *wājib* upon us to hold the belief that all matters which are *mubtada'* and *muhdath* (innovations) are impermissible and a cause of *zulmat* (darkness). This belief is included amongst the principles (*kullīyyāt*) even though it is included in the category of practices (*'amalīyyāt*). This is the reason why the books of *kalām* (theology) contain the permissibility of *masah* on *khuf*, following a *fāsiq* imām, performing the *janāzah salāh* of a *fāsiq* etc. Although these are actions, belief in their permissibility and impermissibility fall in the category of *i'tiqādiyyāt* (*aqā'id*).

You asked for a definition of *tashabbuh* (imitation) which is impermissible. *Tashabbuh* is absolutely *harām* in matters which are disliked. If something is not disliked and *mubāh*, but it is specifically connected to a certain nation, it is also impermissible. If any action is done with the intention of *tashabbuh*, it is absolutely impermissible. Apart from these three, all other forms of *tashabbuh* are permissible. This issue is explained in detail in *Barāhīn-e-Qāṭi'ah* – refer to it.

I am referring to one more point: The book, *Munyah Sharḥ Kabīrī*, which was recently printed in Delhi, lists the reasons for the reprehensibility (*karāhat*) of *salāt ar-raghā'ib*. Refer to it and you can make *qiyās* of the *maulūd* gathering on it and come to a conclusion.

As for holding one's breath ... it is *mubāh* in itself and it also has certain rational benefits: It absorbs moisture, expels heat [from the body], and removes wayward thoughts. The physicians explicitly prescribe it as a treatment for moisture in the heart. Anyone can

learn this. The yogis consider it to be a purifier of the internal self and therefore practise it. Muslim saints also adopted it for the same purpose and not because the yogis practise it. Instead, they consider it beneficial on the basis of their understanding. Since the Qādirīyyah and Chishtīyyah Sufi orders consider 'heat' to be essential, they emphasise the inclusion of this practice in their spiritual exercises. On the other hand, the Naqshbandīyyah consider it desirable [and not essential] because they do not consider 'heat' to be essential. However, there are times when they feel it to be desirable for the sake of fortifying one's *dhikr*. As for the Suhrawardīyyah ... they have no need whatsoever for 'heat' and therefore they do not permit it. In fact, they consider abstention from holding the breath to be the prerequisite to obtaining *wuṣūl* (a connection with Allāh ﷻ).

We learn from this that it is practised by them for the above reasons and it is not peculiar to the yogis alone. To be more precise, it is a rational, academic matter practised by different people at different times. There is a similarity for it in the Sharī'ah: In the *tashahhud* – when a person raises his index finger, he is required to continue looking at it for as long as it is raised (إدامة النظر إلى السبابة). Lowering the gaze is promulgated to acquire humility (*khushū*). Lowering the gaze away from strange women is promulgated to remove stray thoughts. There is thus no possibility of *tashabbuh*. It is neither something which is perceived, nor is it peculiar to the *kuffār*. At the same time, it has certain essential benefits. Thus, there can be no question regarding its permissibility.

As for the *anrakhā* (long coat) ... it is worn by both Muslims and Hindus. There can be no *tashabbuh* in this regard. However, there is a difference with regard to covering of the private area [essential for Muslims, but not Hindus]. In this regard *tashabbuh* will be *harām*. In the same way, walking backwards is not peculiar to any nation.

Adhering strictly to something which is not promulgated as such is prohibited, even if the person does not believe it to be *wājib*, but insists on doing it. If a person continually does something which is *mandūb*, without insisting on doing it, it is permissible and *mustahab*, provided it does not corrupt the masses. If it corrupts the beliefs of the masses, it will be *makrūh*. Consequently, the books of jurisprudence state that it is *makrūh* to adhere strictly to the *mustahab sūrahs* (those whose reading is desirable during specific *ṣalāh* times).

With regard to the incident about the recitation of *Sūrah Qul huwallāhu aḥad* which you asked about – think about it yourself [in this way]: When the *Ṣaḥābī* رضي الله عنه adhered strictly to its recitation and the other *Ṣaḥābah* رضي الله عنهم objected to it, their objection to his strict adherence was not for no Shar'ī reason. That is why, when they related the matter to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he did not stop them, saying: "Why are you disputing with him on such a matter?" Instead, he summoned the person and asked him for the reason why he did not listen to them. If this action of theirs was impermissible, he would have stopped those who complained about him. When the person related his intense love for this *Sūrah*, Rasūlullāh ﷺ permitted him to continue. What this *Ṣaḥābī* رضي الله عنه was doing was permissible in itself and the merit of this *Sūrah* had been established. The permission which was granted to him removed this misgiving because the impermissibility of it [adhering strictly to something which is not promulgated] was made clear to all the *Ṣaḥābah* رضي الله عنهم. It became clear to them, because the people of that time were not on the level of the present-day masses who, despite such an incident occurring, would still continue to consider it *wājib*. The disapproval of the *Ṣaḥābah* رضي الله عنهم and Rasūlullāh's ﷺ affirmation of their disapproval becomes a proof and evidence in itself. Thus, there can be no doubt or misgiving stemming from this incident. This discussion is written in detail in *Barāhīn [Qāṭi'ah]* – but you did not even read this book. I expect anyone who reads *Barāhīn* from beginning to end, with full concentration, not to have any doubts and misgivings about *bid'ah*,

because its author went into great pains to explain this issue. May Allāh ﷻ reward him with the best of rewards.

If you still have any doubts, I permit you to express them. If I am able to, I will, *inshā Allāh*, provide answers to you. However, whatever I have written must first be read with full concentration and reflection and thereafter you may present whatever doubts you have.

The masses and '*ulamā*' who had the courage to commit *bid'ah*, did so because they did not understand the statements of the *ahl-e-haqq*. That is all.

Salām to you and those with you.

25 Muḥarram 1315 A.H.

Fifth letter from Hadrat Thānwī:

To Qudwatul '*Urafā*' Zubdatul Fudalā' Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib, may Allāh ﷻ perpetuate his blessings. As-salāmu 'alaykum.

It was an honour and privilege to receive your letter. The academic and practical harms which this action [attending *mīlād* gatherings] causes has become clear to me from Hadrat's writings. I have made up my mind never to attend such gatherings again. I am now relating my situation here and await your instructions.

Al-hamdu lillāh, I am not under anyone's authority here, nor does anyone impose upon me. However, it has become difficult to work here because of the total opposition against me. Some of the local '*ulamā*' refer to me as a Wahhābī. Some outside '*ulamā*' also come here to inform the (local) people that I am a Wahhābī and to warn them that they should not be deceived by me. Nevertheless, since there was agreement between me and the masses on practical issues [that is, attending their *mīlād* functions], their statements against me

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did not really have any impact on the masses. However, now that I have made the resolution not to attend such gatherings, I definitely foresee problems.

There are three possibilities: (1) I could make some or other excuse for not attending, but it is impossible to do this forever. (2) I could openly express my opposition, but this would result in endless problems and trouble. The worldly harm is that there is a possibility that it would cause ill-feeling among the ignorant masses. The *Dīnī* harm is that any reforms and corrections I have made to the beliefs and practices of these people will all become ineffectual and useless, because they will now have the evil conception that I am a Wahhābī who have been concealing his actual beliefs all this time. (3) I could resign from my present employment.

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I would have chosen this last option without awaiting Hadrat's instruction. However, two things have prevented me from doing this: (a) When a person gives up the source of his livelihood on his own, he is put through trials and tribulations in most cases. I do not know whether I will be able to bear this or not. Whatever wealth I inherited has been spent. A'lā Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] has already prohibited me from seeking employment elsewhere and I also do not have the desire to do this. (b) It seems that – if I were to leave – it would become difficult for the *madrasah* to continue existing. The *Dīnī* activities which are taking place here among the masses and the students are because of the *madrasah*. Atheism among the masses, and philosophy among the learned, had the upper-hand in this area.

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If Hadrat instructs me to resign, both these barriers will be removed. In other words, *inshā Allāh*, I will experience no difficulty. If I do experience any difficulty, I will get the strength to overcome it and the *madrasah* will be able to continue running with Hadrat's *du'ā's*. I will now do whatever Hadrat instructs me to do.

There is an increase in these [*mīlād*] gatherings here during Rabī' al-Awwal and Rabī' al-Ākhir. If Hadrat instructs me to adopt the third option [of resigning], I can make arrangements to terminate my employment by the end of Safar, fulfil whatever dues I have, and make gradual arrangements for the running of the *madrasah*. *Inshā Allāh*, in future, I will not take up any new employment without obtaining permission from Hadrat. If I should err in any way, I ask Hadrat to draw my attention to it without any hesitation. *Inshā Allāh*, I will not delay in carrying out your instructions.

When replying to this letter, I appeal to Hadrat to tell me that he is not displeased with me regarding any matter. Kindly convey my *salām* to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib.

Ashraf 'Alī.

Written from Kānpūr.

29 Muḥarram 1315 A.H.

In reply to the above letter, Hadrat praised Hadrat Thānwī for returning to the truth and congratulated him. Hadrat Thānwī then wrote a reply to that of Hadrat in which he expressed his gratitude to Hadrat and, upon this note, the correspondence between them came to an end.

ختم الله لنا بالحسنی آمین



CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHERS

I now present a different tone of correspondence, namely that in which the person did not take benefit from Hadrat. I present it on the basis of the Arabic saying:

تعرف الأشياء بأضدادها

“One can learn about things by knowing their opposites.”

The reason why I quote this correspondence is so that the reader may learn that, even in cases where Hadrat was certain of the writer's obstinacy and stubbornness, he would not display any deficiency in replying to the actual question and issue at hand. He did this in order to save the person from increasing in ignorant obstinacy, or to prevent his haughtiness from leading him into further deviation. We can refer to it as a debate and discussion, or we can call it a method of conveying and expressing the truth. Regardless of how we look at it, as long as Hadrat saw even the slightest possibility of benefiting people, he would not hold back his pen. Apart from that, it is obvious that guidance is in the Hands of Allāh Alone:

إنك لا تهدي من أحببت ولكن الله يهدي من يشاء

“You cannot guide whomever you like.

Rather, it is Allāh who guides whomever He Wills.”

A person sent the following *istiftā'* to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. He wrote the *fatwā*, titled it *al-jawāb* (answer) and sent it to the person in question. I quote it verbatim:

Question:

What do the '*ulamā*' of the *Dīn* and the muftīs of the Sharī'ah say regarding the following issues? Provide details together with references to the books. May Allāh reward you.

1. Is it permissible to write the following titles, and other similar titles of respect, when addressing one's father, uncle, brother and so on? Are they *ḥarām* or *mubāḥ*? If they are *makrūh* – are they *makrūh taḥrīmī* or *tanzīhī*?

[These words are]: “Qiblah wa Ka'bah (my *qiblah* and Ka'bah); Qiblah dārayn (my *qiblah* of both worlds); Ka'bah kaunayn (my

Ka'bah of both worlds); Qiblah dīnī (my *Dīnī qiblah*); Ka'bah duniyāwī (my worldly Ka'bah); Qiblah ma'āl wa hājāt (my *qiblah* for the Hereafter and for the fulfilment of my needs); Qiblah murādāt (the *qiblah* for all my wishes); Qiblah sūrī (my physical *qiblah*); Ka'bah ma'nawī (my metaphysical Ka'bah)."

2. Is it permissible to shave the neck hair which grows beneath the ears? Is it *makrūh tahrīmī* or *tanzīhī* to do so?

3. Is it permissible to attach gold or silver buttons to the *anrakhā* (coat) or *kurtah* when we know for certain that this gold or silver weighs several grams? These buttons are attached with a fine chain.

4. Is it permissible to quote Persian, Arabic or Urdu poems in the *khutbah* of the two 'īds or the Jumu'ah *khutbah* when the purpose of quoting them is to create a yearning to do good and to create an abhorrence for evil? Also, these poems, contain topics which create yearning or fear. Explain and you will be rewarded.

Answer:

1. It is *makrūh tahrīmī* to utter or write such words and titles of praise, based on the following Hadīth:

لَقَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَا تَطْرُونِي، الْحَدِيثُ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"Do not go beyond the limits in praising me..."

If it is prohibited to go to excesses in using words of praise for Rasūlullāh ﷺ, how can it be permissible to use these for others? That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

2. The neck is a separate part. It is permissible to shave the hair which grows below the limit of the head. However, it is *makrūh tahrīmī* to shave some part of the head and leave other parts.

لقله عليه السلام نهى عن القزعة، الحديث

Rasūlullāh ﷺ prohibited leaving tufts of hair.
That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

3. Gold and silver buttons are permissible. The size of the button is considered and not its weight. However, when it comes to rings, the weight is considered. A button follows the garment, as in the case where it is applied to broad silver lace and gold brocade. The size or extent is considered and not the weight.

Durr-e-Mukhtār ازرار الذهب (gold buttons) are permissible.

That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

4. It is against the Sunnah to quote poems in the *khuṭbah* of Jumu'ah and 'Id. It will be *makrūh* because it cannot be established from the first centuries (قرون مشهود لها بالخير). This could gradually lead to excesses. It is therefore *makrūh*.

That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, *may Allāh pardon him*.

Response from Maulwī Qāsim 'Alī Sāhib ibn Maulānā al-Maulwī 'Ālam 'Alī Sāhib Murādābādī:

I say, after seeking inspiration from Allāh ﷻ:

1. The answer to the first question is correct.

2. The correct answer to the second question is this:

It is *makrūh tahrīmī* to shave the neck hair to the exclusion of the hair of the head. However, it is permissible to shave it together with the hair of the head, as stated in *Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*:

وعن أبي حنيفة يكره أن يحلق قفاً إلا عند الحجامة كذا في الإنابيع

The same is mentioned in *Fatāwā Ibrāhīm Shāmī* in *Kitāb Muṣīd al-Mustafīd*. Whoever wishes, may refer to it.

3. The answer to the third question requires certain details. If gold and silver buttons are worn solely for beautification, but without any intention of stirring one's pride, then – although it is permissible to wear them – it is *makrūh tanzīhī*. It is preferable and *mustahab* to abstain. This is because the permissibility which the answerer [referring to Imām Rabbānī] established from *Durr-e-Mukhtār* also contains the words لا بأس .

The actual text reads thus:

لا بأس بأزرار الديباج والذهب

The words لا بأس show that it is better and *mustahab* to do the opposite of it, and *tark-e-aulā* (leaving something which is preferable) is known as *makrūh tanzīhī*. Consequently, *Khazānatur Riwāyāt* states:

لفظ لا بأس دال على أن يستحب غيره

And if a person wears such buttons out of pride and haughtiness, it is *makrūh tahrīmī* as stated by 'Allāmah Shāmī:

والحاصل أن كل ما كان على وجه التكبر يكره وإن فعل لحاجة وضرورة وهو المختار وظاهره أنه لو كان لمجرد الزينة بلا تكبر ولا تفاخر يكره لكن نقل بعده عن الظهيرية ما يخالفه تأمل فقط.

4. The answer to the fourth question is correct because the absence of poetry in the *khutbahs* of 'īd and Jumu'ah in the first three eras [of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Saḥābah رضى الله عنه and Tābi'ūn] is proof that it is *makrūh*

as stated by Mullā Sa'd Rūmī in his book, *Majālis al- Abrār*. That is all. Muḥammad Qāsim 'Alī, *may Allāh pardon him*.

Imām Rabbānī's reply:

From Rashīd Aḥmad, *may Allāh pardon him*. As-salāmu 'alaykum. I read the observations of Maulwī Qāsim 'Alī Sāhib.

1. I am most thankful to Maulwī Sāhib for considering my first answer to be correct. Even if he considered it wrong, no one would have said anything.

2. With regard to the second answer: Maulwī Sāhib quoted a text from *'Ālamgīrīyyah*. I am surprised that Maulwī Sāhib has not established the meaning of قفا. The word قفا refers to the back of the head and it is considered to be part of the head. A Ḥadīth states:

يَعْقِدُ الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَى قَافِيَةِ أَحَدِكُمْ ثَلَاثَ عَقَدٍ، الْخ.

"Shayṭān ties three knots at the back of a person's head..."

Will the Maulwī Sāhib translate this as 'ties knots on his neck'? Sub-ḥānallāh! The Arabic word for 'neck' is رَقَبَة and not قفا. So without doubt, shaving the قفا alone falls under the prohibition of قَزَعَة. And this is *makrūh taḥrīmī* as stated at the end of my answer. As for shaving the neck رَقَبَة ... this is another issue altogether. The Maulwī Sāhib made an objection to my answer because he considered قفا and رَقَبَة to mean the same thing. Whereas قفا is a part of the head, and the neck is another part.

This observation of his is based on some old anger and his misunderstanding of the meaning of قفا. The correct answer is what I had given. That is all.

3. With regard to the third issue: I said that gold and silver buttons are *mubāh*. The words لا بأس actually mean *mubāh*, in most places they mean *tark-e-aulā* and in some places they also mean *mustahab* and *mandūb*. In the issue in question, the words لا بأس mean *mubāh* and, if this *mubāh* is referred to as *tark-e-aulā*, there is no harm in saying so. However, it does not mean *makrūh tanzīhī* in this context. Where the issue of buttons is discussed in *Durr-e-Mukhtār*, the following text can also be found:

لا بأس بـسائر الألوان

In other words, 'apart from red and yellow'.

Based on the Maulwī Sāhib's explanation, it will be necessary for him to say that green and black buttons are also *makrūh tanzīhī*, whereas it is wrong to say so. In short, the Maulwī Sāhib has made up a general principle claiming that the words لا بأس are used to show *makrūh tanzīhī*, whereas this is not a general principle.

Tark-e-aulā does not necessarily make something *makrūh tanzīhī* in every context. If a person has an understanding of *fiqh* he will realize that it is *makrūh tanzīhī* in certain instances and not in other instances. In this context it does not mean *makrūh tanzīhī*, but *mubāh*. If the *mubāh* is referred to as *tark-e-aulā*, it will be correct. However, in order to consider it *makrūh tanzīhī*, we will have to produce another proof to establish *karāhat*. Thus, the Maulwī Sāhib's discussion in this regard is futile.

As for considering it *makrūh tahrīmī* if it is worn out of pride ... why should that be confined to silver buttons? If a *daupattā* (head covering) made of dress fabric or an *angrakhā* (long coat) made of muslin is worn out of pride, it will also be *makrūh tahrīmī*. This applies to all things which are *mubāh*. I am most astonished by this explanation of the Maulwī Sāhib. He is only looking at the

narrations but does not seem to possess an understanding of jurisprudence.

4. The Maulwī Sāhib confirmed my fourth answer and the proof is the same which I provided. However, he altered the text and presented it here. We will overlook this. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ! The answer remained correct. That is all. Was salām.



Question 1

A person asked: Hadrat, when an animal is hunted with a gun and shot by a bullet, the majority Mālikī scholars of today consider the animal to be halāl. Some young 'ulamā' are unsure because it seems to be similar to an animal which is struck by an arrow.

Answer:

People are confused in this regard because the books of *fiqh* consider إحراق بالنار (burning with fire) to be a qāṭi' (an instrument of cutting – like a knife). This is why some 'ulamā', after assuming a bullet fired from a gun to be a muhriq (something which burns) and a qāṭi', issued a fatwā of permissibility, whereas this is incorrect. I had asked Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib about it and he said: "Shoot at a target which contains wool and you will be able to ascertain the facts." I followed his advice. The bullet went through the wool without burning anything. Thus, a bullet is an object [or instrument] which breaks, and does not burn. As long as the animal is not slaughtered, it will not be considered halāl.

Question 2

A Punjabi 'ālim sent an istiftā' in which he tried to prove that it is also necessary for the person who helps to hold the legs of the animal, while it is being slaughtered, to say Bismillāh. To prove his point, he quoted a text of Nawāb Quṭb ad-Dīn Khān rahimahullāh which states that Maulānā Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib was of the same view.

Answer:

Hadrat replied: It is *wājib* on the person who places his hand on the slaughterer's hand and moves the knife with him to read *Bismillāh*. It is not *wājib* on the person who holds the legs of the animal. When Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was in India, he was of the same opinion, as stated by Nawāb Sāhib. However, when he emigrated to Arabia, the same question was posed to a very senior Hanafī jurist (I cannot remember his name) in the presence of Shāh Sāhib. He wrote this reply: "It [*Bismillāh*] is *wājib* only on the slaughterer." This *fatwā* was pasted on Maulwī Ahmad 'Alī Sāhib's personal copy of *Tirmidhī*. I saw this *fatwā* with my very own eyes at Maulwī Sāhib. It read thus:

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا - بَلْ عَلَى الذَّابِحِ فَقَطْ

*"O Allāh, increase me in knowledge ...
Rather, it is [wājib] on the slaughterer only."*

A similar question was posed in the era of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib, but he had lost his eyesight by then. Thus, Maulānā Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib wrote the reply to the *istiftā'*. However, he erred in his answer and stamped the *fatwā*. The error started from this point. However, when he emigrated and a similar question was posed to him, he also said that it was not *wājib*. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī then said: I have established this from the Hadīth which contains the following words:

مَا انْهَرَقَ الدَّمُ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ فَكُلْ (او كما قال)

"The thing which sheds blood and the Name of Allāh was mentioned over it, you may eat it."

In this Hadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered the eating of the animal, if it was killed by something which sheds blood [causes blood to flow out] and if Allāh's Name was mentioned over it. Thus, if the person

who was moving the knife said *Bismillāh* – and *tasmiyah* was said over the knife which is *muhriq-e-dumm* (the object which causes blood to flow out), there can be no doubt about the permissibility of such an animal, even if the person who was holding its legs did not say *Bismillāh*.

Question 3

Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiyānī's beliefs about the 'death of 'Īsā عليه السلام are well-known. Are we allowed to prevent his followers from coming to our *masājid* and to express abhorrence when they join us in our *ṣalāh*?

Answer:

Mirzā Qādiyānī is deviated and so are his followers. It is best if they remain away from the congregation – just as it is best for the Shī'ah and Khawārij to remain away. Do not listen to their baseless statements. If you can expel them from your congregation, do so. If you are able to silence them through debates, you may certainly do that. If not, you may silence them with your hands.

'Īsā's عليه السلام 'death' can definitely not be proven from the Qur'ān. They are merely making ludicrous statements. Our 'ulamā' have already responded to them, but these deviated people are not desisting in their blasphemy. They have no shame whatsoever. The belief which has come down to us from the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم is that 'Īsā عليه السلام was raised alive into the heavens and that he will return to this world [for a period of time], after which he will then pass away. Any belief which is contrary to this is false. That is all.

Question 4

It is stated in a Ḥadīth that, if *kalimah ṭayyibah* is read 75,000 times for a deceased person, he shall go to Paradise. This is followed by *daujā* (a 2nd day of observing this practice), *rijā* (3rd day) and continues in this way. The 'ulamā' consider this to be a *bid'ah*. How should we then convey rewards to the deceased? Can we stand

at the deceased's grave, house, or a nearby Musjid and read the Qur'ān or *kalimah tayyibah* on a specific day? What is the ruling with regard to calling someone to read the Qur'ān at his grave, paying the reader for the recitation, or attending the *tijā, duswā*, (3rd day, 10th day observations) etc?

Answer:

When people gather for the bathing and enshrouding (*tajhīz wa takfīn*) of the deceased, those who are busy with this task may continue with it. The others must occupy themselves in reading the *kalimah tayyibah* as much as they can. After that, they should read the remainder [of the stipulated 75, 000] in their houses. There is no need for them to assemble for this purpose. The Hadīth does not say that it must be read in a single assembly (gathering), or that it must be a collective reading. The Hadīth merely says that it must be read – regardless of how it is done.

It is permissible to get someone to read the Qur'ān at the grave if it is solely for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. Neither the person who arranged for the reader, nor the reader himself should even consider any payment for this. Anything [any type of remuneration – whether cash or kind] given out of habit or as a norm at any place, also falls under the ruling of 'payment'. There is no reward for such a reading – no reward for the reader nor for the deceased. It is not permissible to attend the *tijā, duswā* or any other similar function. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 5

A cow is co-owned by a Muslim and a Hindu and they both live in a place which is under the rule of Muslims. The cow is under the Muslim's care and is about to die. There is the fear of it being classified a *maytah* [in the case of it dying a natural death]. The Hindu refuses to permit the Muslim to slaughter it and has issued a stern prohibition against its slaughter.

Is it permissible, impermissible or *wājib* for the Muslim partner to slaughter it? If the Muslim slaughters it, will he have to pay a fifty percent compensation to his Hindu partner? If he does not slaughter it – out of consideration for his Hindu partner's religion – and it dies, will he be sinful?

If the cow is under the Hindu partner's care, is it necessary for him to inform his Muslim partner of the cow's condition and then have it slaughtered? If it was necessary for him to inform his Muslim partner, and he does not inform him, can any fine or punishment be imposed on him according to the Sharī'ah? If the Hindu did not inform him [of the cow's condition] and the cow died, does it become *wājib* on the Hindu to pay fifty percent compensation to his Muslim partner? Kindly provide detailed answers to each question with Shar'ī proofs. Khalīl Ahmad."

Answer:

It is *mustahab* and not *wājib* to slaughter a dying animal. If the owner should not slaughter it, it does not entail *idā'at* (destroying it). *Idā'at* refers to the act of destruction by a *dā'i'* (destroyer). No act of destruction was committed in this case. Rather, the person has abstained from rectifying the situation. There is a vast difference between giving or consuming harmful medication, and abstaining from taking any medication. The former is *harām* and the latter is *mubāh*. The following is mentioned in *Abū Dā'ūd*:

باب فيمن اضطر إلى الميتة: ان رجلا نزل الحرة ومعه أهله وولده فقال رجل إن ناقة لي ضلت فإن وجدتها فأمسكها. فوجدوها فلم يجد صاحبها فمرضت فقالت امرأته انحرها فأبى فنفقت فقالت اسلخها حتى نقدد شحمها ولحمها وناكله فقال حتى أسأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأتاه فساله فقال هل عندك غنى يغنيك فقال لا قال فكلواها فجاء صاحبها فأخبره الخبر فقال هلا كنت نحررتها قال استحييت منك، انتهى.

"A person settled down in Hurrah with his wife and children. A

man came to him and said: 'I have lost my camel. If you find it, you must keep it for me.' The person found it, but could not find its owner. The camel fell ill and his wife told him to slaughter it, but he refused. The camel died and his wife said: 'Skin it so that we could cut its fat and meat into strips, dry them and eat them [because we have no food and we have no alternative but to eat this carrion].' He replied: 'Let me go and ask Rasūlullāh ﷺ first.' He went and asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He said: 'Do you have sufficient wealth which would enable you not to take any benefit from this camel?' He replied: 'No.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: 'Very well, you may eat it.' After some time, the owner returned and he related what happened. The owner said: 'Why did you not slaughter it?' He replied: 'I was feeling shy of you.'"

We learn from this Hadīth that it is not *wājib* to slaughter a dying animal. However, it will be sinful to abstain from slaughtering it if it is done out of consideration for the Hindu religion, because Allāh ﷻ says:

لَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ، الْآيَةُ (مائدة)

"Do not follow their vain desires by turning away from the truth which has come to you."

وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ، الْآيَةُ (أنعام)

"Do not follow the vain desires of those who do not believe in the Hereafter."

If the Muslim slaughters it, there can never be any payment of liability to the disbeliever, because liability only applies in the case of causing destruction or damage (*itlāf wa ifsād*) – not in the case of *islāh* – rectification, or putting things right. The person will be making *islāh* if he should slaughter it. How then can there be any liability? However, he will definitely have to pay half the value of

the skin and meat to the Hindu.

If the cow was under the Hindu's care and he did not inform his partner of its impending death, and it dies, there is no liability on his part. This is because his religion strictly prohibits him [from informing his Muslim partner and thereby causing it to be slaughtered], and in our Sharī'ah it is not *wājib* to slaughter a dying animal. It is also clear from the following Hadīth:

إنا أمرنا بتركهم وما يدينون

"We are ordered to leave them to their religion."

The following is stated in *Durr-e-Mukhtār, Bāb al-Luqṭah*:

لو انتفخ زق فمر به رجل قلو لم يأخذه بري، انتهى، لو منع المالك عن
أمواله حتى هلك يائمه ولا يضمن، انتهى

"If a musk bag is opened and a person passes by and does not seal it, he is absolved."

"If an owner prohibits anyone from using his possession until it is destroyed, he will be sinful, but there is no liability."

The absence of liability is clear from these narrations. However, if the condition of liability was written in their partnership agreement, then they will be liable.

في رد المحتار فصل الخبرية: وقد ذكر الإمام أبو يوسف في كتاب الخراج في صلح أبي عبيدة مع أهل الشام أنه صالحهم واشترط عليهم حين دخلها وأن لا يشتموا مسلما ولا يضربوه إلى أن قال فإن نحن خالفنا شيئا مما شرطناه لكم فلا ذمة لنا وقد حل لكم منا ما يحل لكم من أهل المعاندة والشقاق، انتهى ملخصا.

"Imām Abū Yūsuf rahimahullāh states in Kitāb al-Kharāj – with

reference to the agreement between Abū 'Ubaydah ؓ and the people of Shām:

When he went to Shām, he entered into an agreement with its people and laid down the following conditions:

They will not be vulgar towards any Muslim. They will not strike any Muslim, [They will not ...] Eventually he said: 'If we go against any stipulation contained in this agreement which we have made with you, we will no longer enjoy any liability over you and it will become lawful for you to take from us whatever is lawful for you to take from your enemies.'"

Question 6

The following juristic issue was discussed at an assembly of honourable and erudite '*ulamā*':

"When would the following situation arise:

A woman breastfeeds someone else's child and the co-wife becomes prohibited (*harām*) to him forever."

The questioner had posed the question in the form of a poem. It is quoted below.³⁷

At the time, Hadrat had gone to Ambheta to attend the wedding of Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad, the brother of Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib.

The entire assembly [of honourable and erudite '*ulamā*'] was confounded and was trying to think of examples under which such a situation could arise, but they could not find a solution. When the issue was eventually presented to Hadrat, he responded without hesitation.

³⁷ The poem is written in Persian. It was not translated because its essence is contained in the question.

Answer:

A woman breastfed her minor husband [he was still a child]. He then married another woman [Hindah]. The co-wife now breastfeeds him [the child]. The woman he had married first (the co-wife) – that is, the wife who breastfed him first, will now become harām to him.

All the 'ulamā' were astounded at Hadrat's quick response to such a confusing issue. Maulwī Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī composed this reply in the form of a poem. It is also quoted below.³⁸

This means that, since the woman is the wife of her foster-son – because she was in his marriage – Hindah's co-wife becomes harām upon their husband.

We explain it further as follows:

Rābi'ah is a young woman and she was married to a child who is still an infant within the age of being breastfed. His name was Zayd. Rābi'ah breastfeeds her husband, Zayd. She thus becomes his (foster) mother. She is therefore harām upon him [Zayd]. Later, both Rābi'ah and another woman by the name of Hindah marries 'Umar. A few days later, Hindah breastfeeds Zayd, who is still an infant within the age of being breastfed.

Rābi'ah will now become harām upon 'Umar because she was Zayd's wife at some time in the past. By Hindah breastfeeding Zayd, Zayd has become her husband's ['Umar] foster son.

The co-wife, Rābi'ah, now becomes her own husband's [Umar's] daughter-in-law because she was his foster son's [Zayd's] wife [in the past]. She will therefore be harām upon him.

³⁸ Refer to previous footnote.

The confusion in this issue arises when Hindah breast-feeds Zayd and the co-wife [Rābi'ah] becomes *harām* upon their husband. The above example demonstrates the possibility of such a situation.

الله دره الله دره – his achievement is due to Allāh ﷻ Alone. A person would have to bend his mind around this issue for several hours before he can understand the answer. Yet, Hadrat was able to solve it the moment the question was posed to him. That quick! This demonstrates his juristic acumen, sharp mind, quick understanding, and intelligence.

Question 7

A husband had spent the equivalent of four hundred rupees from his wife's dowry and whatever she had received as an inheritance. He had spent this money with her approval, but no mention was made of whether it was a loan or a gift. After some time – on a few occasions – the husband made some jewellery for his wife, after which he again spent it. On the last occasion, he made jewellery to the value of nine hundred rupees for her after which he passed away. Before he passed away, he did not clearly state whether it was given to her in lieu of what he had taken from her, or whether it was a gift to her. Some time later the wife then also passed away and the jewellery came into the hands of the husband's heirs. The wife had, of her own free will, absolved her husband of the dowry just before she passed away. The heirs, on both sides [husband's family and wife's family], are now disputing over the ownership of the jewellery. The husband's heirs consider it to be their father's property. Who is entitled to the jewellery – the husband's heirs or the wife's heirs?

Answer from different 'ulamā':

The husband had made the jewellery and had given it to his wife without stating whether it was on loan to her. The wife had taken possession over it and had used it as if she was the owner thereof for as long as she was alive. Therefore, the jewellery would be

considered to be the wife's possession. This is because the outward testimony is proof of the wife's ownership.

قال في الشامي وما يصلح للنساء فهو للمرأة لشهادة الظاهر

وفي العالمكيرية امرأة رفعت لها متاعا إلى الزوج وقالت بع هذا
واصرفه في لوازم البيت هل عليه قيمتها نعم

"It is stated in Shāmī: Whatever is suited to women, will be considered to be the woman's possession based on the testimony of the outward situation."

"It is stated in 'Ālamgīrīyyah: A woman picked up an item which belonged to her, gave it to her husband and said: 'Sell it and use the money for the house needs.' Is the value of the item wājib on the husband? The answer is yes, it is wājib on him."

The jurists have laid down a principle: When either of the two spouses pass away, the statement of the surviving spouse will be considered. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Second answer:

The above answer is incorrect. The disputed jewellery is the possession of the husband's heirs. The husband's heirs are the *dhul yudd* (those who have the jewellery in their hands). They are the defendants and the wife's heirs are the claimants.

The claimants cannot prove ownership through witnesses. They cannot prove that the husband made his wife owner of the jewellery – either in return for her wealth which he had taken from her, in exchange for her dowry which he had used, or as a gift. The wife's heirs acknowledge that the husband was the original owner. Thus, in such a case, a mere outward proof [stating that jewellery is suited to women] cannot warrant right of ownership. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

The answer provided by Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī:

Both answers are incorrect.

The error in the first answer is thus:

When the husband made the jewellery and gave it to his wife, it could have meant two things: (1) he gave it to her as a loan (*'āriyah*), or (2) he gave it to her as a gift (*hibah*). The respondent's statement that the wife 'used it as if she was its owner' is not demonstrated anywhere in the question. When jewellery is loaned, control over it is exercised throughout one's life.

The proof which was provided to substantiate the respondent's reply, i.e. "*Whatever is suited to women will be considered to be the woman's possession,*" is not related to this situation because this principle applies when the actual owner is unknown. However, in this case we know for certain that the husband gave it to her. Thus, his ownership has been established. Similarly, the principle "*the statement of the surviving spouse will be considered*" also applies when it is not known who the actual owner was and both parties lay claim to its ownership.

One thing can be established from the statement of *'Ālamgīriyyah*: "*An item which the wife gives to her husband, without clearly stating that it is a gift to him, will be a loan which he will have to repay.*" Based upon this, if the equivalent of four hundred rupees is considered to be the wife's property, it will be correct, but her heirs cannot lay claim to all the jewellery.

The second answer also is incorrect in the sense that the statement of the *dhul yudd* is only considered when the ownership of the wealth cannot be ascertained. This is not the case here. Instead, the issue here is whether transfer of ownership took place through *hibah* (gift) or not. The claim is over the transfer of ownership and not over the ownership itself.

According to me, the correct answer to this issue is thus:

We have to look at the '*urf*' (prevailing norms) of the people we are dealing with. If their '*urf*' considers whatever the husband gives to his wife as *tamlīk* (making her the owner of it), then it will be considered to be a *hibah*. If he gives it as an '*āriyat*' (loan), it will be considered as a loan. Moreover, if there is no '*urf*' – that is, the community practices upon it both ways – then the equivalent of four hundred rupees belongs to the wife because she had originally given jewellery to the value of this amount to her husband and it will be considered as a repayment of debt. The remainder will belong to the husband because, when any statement or action has two possibilities, the lesser of the two is considered. Between a debt and a gift, a debt is considered to be the lesser. Between a gift and a loan, a loan is considered to be the lesser.

رجل حمل رجلا على دابته يراد به الهبة تارة والعارية أخرى وإذا نوى أحدهما صحت نيته وإن لم يكن له نية حمل على الأدنى فلا يلزم الأعلى بالشك، انتهى. كذا في در المختار في باب العارية. الله تعالى أعلم.

"A person carried another [person] on his animal. It is considered to be a *hibah* at times and an '*āriyah*' at other times. If either of them make the intention of *hibah* or '*āriyah*', the intention will be valid. If no intention is made, the lesser ('*āriyah*') will be considered because the greater cannot be imposed on the basis of a doubt (whereas the lesser is certain – there is no doubt in it)."

Question 8:

Very often a cow, buffalo or any other *halāl* animal walks onto the railway track, is run over by a train, and cut into two. The animal remains gasping for breath for some time, whereafter it dies. Is there any Shar'ī possibility of slaughtering it?

Answer:

If a camel or cow is cut in two by a train in such a way that the major portion of the body is on its head-side or upper half of the

body, the top half can be slaughtered and consumed. The other parts [bottom half] will be considered carrion [and therefore haram]. If only the head or neck was detached [by the train] and two finger's width of the neck remains, it may be slaughtered. If a *mutaraddiyah* (an animal which has fallen from an elevated place) is slaughtered while it still has life in it, it is considered permissible [to consume its meat]. You will find all the explanations in this regard – both explicitly and implicitly – in *Durr-e-Mukhtār*. As for an animal whose neck is completely severed ... it no longer has the place of slaughter. Thus, it cannot become halāl – even if one should attempt to slaughter it.

Question 9

I came across a detailed article in which the author states the permissibility of making *tawāf* of graves. I would like a referenced analysis of it and am therefore sending it to Hadrat. (The article was written in Persian, but I am quoting it in Urdu because the masses do not understand Persian).

“A person, out of his intense love and respect, makes *tawāf* of the graves of the *aulliyā'* of Allāh ﷺ. However, some '*ulamā'* consider this to be haram. Thus, I felt it necessary to investigate this issue. The permissibility of making *tawāf* of the graves of the *aulliyā'* is in accordance with the principles of the Sharī'ah. The fundamental ruling with regard to all things is that of permissibility (*ibāḥat*). As long as there is no proof for its impermissibility, we cannot say that it is haram. The ruling of permissibility of *tawāf* of graves is not in need of a proof. Rather, the ruling of impermissibility has to be proven – whether from the Qur'ān, Hadīth, or the statement of a *mujtahid*.

Some contemporary '*ulamā'* quote the verse:

وليطوفوا بالبيت الحقيق

“And people should make *tawāf*
of the Ancient House [the Ka’bah].”

They say this verse shows the *tawāf* is reserved for the Ka’bah alone. I say to them: This verse does not contain any word of restriction (*kalimatu ḥaṣr*) whereby one can say: “Make *tawāf* of the Ka’bah only.” Thus, their claim of restriction [of *tawāf* around the Ka’bah] is without any proof and incorrect. The most that can be said regarding this verse is that it means: *Tawāf* of the Ka’bah is from among the fundamentals of *ḥajj*. It is one of the acts of worship, and it is a worship which is specific to the Ka’bah.

On the other hand, *tawāf* of the graves of the *auliyā’* is not an act of worship. It is on the basis of showing respect and honour and we have been ordered to show respect and honour to the *auliyā’* of Allāh ﷺ. Thus, *tawāf* of their graves is permissible as an act of respect (*تعظيمًا*) and not as an act of worship (*عبادة*). Yes, if any act of respect is prohibited by the Sharī’ah – e.g. a prostration of respect (*sajdah ta’zīmī*) – it will certainly be *ḥarām*. Nevertheless, as long as its prohibition by the Sharī’ah cannot be established, any claim of prohibition is unacceptable. Rather, based on the fundamental principle [mentioned at the beginning], we will have to give a ruling of permissibility. I therefore make this request: If there is any verse, *Hadīth* or statement of a *mujtahid* which states the prohibition of making *tawāf* of the graves of the *auliyā’* of Allāh ﷺ, then present it.

Answer.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ and salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.
Allāh ﷻ says:

وإذ بوأنا لإبراهيم مكان البيت أن لا تشرك بي شيئا وطهر بيتي للطائفين
والعاكفين والركع السجود، الخ.

In the above verse, Allāh ﷻ orders total abstention from *shirk* (polytheism – ascribing partners to Allāh ﷻ) and the total absence of *shirk*. The verse also orders purification of the House [Ka'bah] for those performing *tawāf* of it. Purification in this context refers to purifying the House of all idols. Consequently, the *mufasssirin* (commentators of the Qur'an) say: We learn from this that *tawāf* is similar to *sajdah* in the sense that it is also a worship. In order for this worship to be valid, it is necessary for it to be purified of everything apart from Allāh ﷻ. It thus becomes obvious that *tawāf*, like *sajdah*, cannot be performed for anyone other than Allāh ﷻ.

The fact that *tawāf* is a worship is established through عبارة النص (a statement of a text, namely the Qur'ān). Performing *tawāf* for anyone other than Allāh ﷻ is established through إشارة النص (an inference from a text, namely the Qur'ān).

Allāh ﷻ says in another verse:

وليطوفوا بالبيت العتيق

This is an order showing *ijāb-e-tawāf* (the obligation of *tawāf* – that *tawāf* is *wājib*). Such *ijāb* (obligation) does not apply to matters concerning respect, or to acts which are done out of respect (*umūr-e-ta'zīmīyyah*). On the contrary, it applies only to an act of worship. Thus, *tawāf* is a worship established through عبارة النص and we could establish a general principle and say: "*Tawāf* is an '*ibādah*.'"

Another verse states:

أمر الا تعبدوا إلا إياه، الخ

“He [Allāh ﷻ] Orders you not to worship anyone but Him.”

This verse confines and restricts worship to Allāh. In other words (worship is restricted to none other than Allāh ﷻ). We have already established that *tawāf* is an act of worship. Therefore we can say الطواف لا يكون إلا لله (tawāf is reserved for none other than Allāh ﷻ). Thus, the confinement and restriction of *tawāf* to Allāh ﷻ is proven by *إشارة النص* and *عبارة النص*.

Together with this, the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ proves that *tawāf* for anyone, apart from Allāh ﷻ, is *shirk*:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تضطرب اليات نساء دوس حول ذي الخصة.

“The Final Hour will not occur until the buttocks of the women of the Daus tribe move around Dhū al- Khislah.”

In other words, the women of the Daus tribe will most certainly move around [make *tawāf*] of Dhū al-Khislah before the Day of Resurrection.

The *ijmā'* of the *ummah* also states that worship is solely reserved for Allāh ﷻ and not permissible for anyone apart from Him.

'Alī Qārī writes in *Sharḥ Manāsik*:

(ولا يطوف) أي لا يدور حول البقعة الشريفة لأن الطواف من مختصات الكعبة المنيفة فحرم حول قبور الأنبياء والأولياء.

“(One cannot perform *tawāf*) – that is, move around the grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – because *tawāf* is reserved solely for the Ka'bah. It is thus *ḥarām* around the graves of the Prophets ﷺ and the *auliyā*.”

It can thus be established through all four sources [of the Sharī'ah]

that *tawāf* for anyone apart from Allāh ﷻ is *shirk*.

We now come to the four points which were quoted by the questioner, namely (1) *tawāf* is a way of showing *ta'zīm* (respect), (2) it is permissible to make *ta'zīm* of the *auliyā'*, (3) there is no restriction or confinement and (4) the fundamental ruling with regard to all things is that of permissibility (*ibāḥat*).

All four points are inadmissible because:

(2) The only *ta'zīm* which one is permitted to show to the *auliyā'* is that which is not peculiar to Allāh ﷻ and which does not fall into the category of worship. Any *ta'zīm* which is considered to be an act of worship is most certainly not lawful for anyone, apart from Allāh ﷻ. لقوله تعالى أمر ألا تعبدوا الخ - ﷻ. Thus, any *ta'zīm* which is considered as an act of worship is *ḥarām* for anyone apart from Allāh ﷻ and will constitute *shirk* - even if it is for the Prophets ﷺ. However, it is permissible to perform any act of showing *ta'zīm* that is not on the level of worship. Such an act may be shown to the *auliyā'*. This will, however, also need to be ascertained from the original sources. Nevertheless, any *ta'zīm* which is imposed by Allāh ﷻ, for Allāh ﷻ, is reserved for Allāh ﷻ and *ḥarām* for anyone else.

(1) Thus it follows that *tawāf*, which is a compulsory worship for Allāh ﷻ, will remain *ḥarām* for the *auliyā'*.

(3) The fact that worship is restricted and confined to Allāh ﷻ is established from the original texts and the permissibility of worshipping the *auliyā'* is absolutely baseless and false. This is because worship refers to absolute submission and the according of absolute respect. This is most certainly not permitted for anyone other than Allāh ﷻ.

(4) The principle, "the fundamental ruling with regard to all things is that of permissibility (*ibāḥat*)," only applies when there is no text which provides reference to it. Since the prohibition of the worship of anyone other than Allāh ﷻ can be proven by the abovementioned texts, the fundamental ruling of impermissibility applies.

Now, if anyone wants to remove any *ta'zīm* from the level of worship, thereby make it lawful upon others, he will personally have to provide proof for it. Thus, the matter has now been turned around. The author [of the article] did not look at the text concerning the prohibition of worship [of anyone apart from Allāh ﷻ]. Had he looked at it, he would not have said what he said. The text is very clear:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

"Thee Alone do we worship"

This is repeated many times during the day.

Conclusion: A text stating prohibition can be found here. The essential prohibition is on the limit of *ta'zīm* (i.e. *sajdah*). Depending on how much is excluded from a text, that much will be excluded from the prohibition, and it will thus be permissible. If there is no text of exclusion, it will not be permissible. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 10

A person performs the '*asr salāh* with congregation before two *mithl* (before the shadow of an object is twice its length). He insists on performing it this way and claims that this is the correct opinion. He says that the opinion stating that '*asr salāh* must be performed after two *mithl* is neither correct, nor can it be established from any reliable narrations. The person's opinion and practice in this regard is disliked by the others who frequent the Musjid. Kindly provide a convincing answer informing us who is correct.

Answer:

According to *Sāhibayn* [Imam Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*, Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh*] and the other three imāms, the correct time for '*asr salāh* is after one *mithl*.

The imāmat of Jibra'īl ؑ, which occurred in Makkah, is the proof for this opinion. The well-known (*mash-hūr*) opinion of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* is that the time for 'asr *ṣalāh* is after two *mithl*. There are a few Aḥadīth which are used as proof [for his opinion]. One of them is the Ḥadīth of Ḥadrat Abū Dharr ؓ which Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as follows:

Rasūlullāh ؐ was on a journey, and when it was just past mid-day, Ḥadrat Bilāl ؓ went to call out the *adhān*. Since it was the intense summer season, Rasūlullāh ؐ said to him: ابرء ("wait until it gets a bit cooler"). This happened several times until, according to the narrator: ساءى الفيء التلوى ("until the length of the shadows equalled the hills"). It becomes absolutely clear from this Ḥadīth that, when it is intensely hot and Madīnah and its surrounding areas fall at $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ – and the sun inclines up to 24° – the original shadow decreases. Thus, if the shadows of the hills equalled the height of the hills, the shadow most certainly passed one *mithl* and the second *mithl* started. The *adhān* of *zuhr* was called out at that time and performed thereafter. This is obvious to people of intelligence.

Since the time of *zuhr* remained within the two *mithl*, the time for 'asr would most certainly be after two *mithl*. This is a clear proof in favour of the fact that the time for 'asr *ṣalāh* comes in after two *mithl*.

This Ḥadīth is in conflict with the previous incident which mentions the imāmat of Jibra'īl ؑ in Makkah. The incident which occurred in Madīnah took place after the one in Makkah. All the imāms unanimously state that the latter statement or action of Rasūlullāh ؐ should be adopted as it is more certain, and that the previous [statement or action] has been abrogated (*mansūkh*). The possibility of abrogation exists here as well. Based upon this, the well-known opinion of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* seems to be the preferred opinion. Therefore this opinion is also strong. This is the reason why many senior erudite 'ulamā' and jurists adopt this

opinion and prefer it. This will be made clear to all who refer to *Durr-e-Mukhtār*, *Radd-e-Muhtār* and *Bahr ar-Rā'iq*.

Since the narration (*riwāyat*) and *madh-hab* of two *mithl* are authentic and correct, it will be labelled as *tafrūqah* (causing division and dissension) if one should cast this aside in such places where it causes dissension among the Muslims. Based upon a clear-cut Qur'ānic text – *وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا* – causing division is *ḥarām*, a major sin, and warrants the pleasure of Shayṭān – the accursed. Rasūlullāh ﷺ abstained from, and ordered others to abstain from *mustahab* actions if these actions caused divisions and disputes. The extreme limit for the '*asr ṣalāh*' is one *mithl* – as a *mustahab* time – and after two *mithl* also remains the *mustahab* time, even though the first is preferred. Thus, to cause division among Muslims over a 'preferred' matter and to cause such dissension whereby two people of the same Musjid perform ṣalāh separately – then this seems to be nothing but ignorance about the order of the Sharī'ah. Such people must be stopped from causing such division. Those who do not desist should be dealt with severely if one has the power to do so. This is because it is *wājib* to remove anything which causes friction and trouble. This is mentioned in detail in the *Aḥādīth* and *fiqh*. That is all.

Question 11

In *Hidāyah* (Mustafā'ī edition, p. 24) the '*illat*' (reason) for classifying human skin and flesh as impure is given as *karāmat* (sanctity). However, this cannot be the '*illat*' for its *najāsat* (impurity). If it is the '*illat*', then it will also be the '*illat*' for *ḥurmat* (impermissibility). Although the highest level of *ḥurmat* necessitates *najāsat*, to consider this *ḥurmat* as *ḥurmat li 'aynihi* (impermissibility on the basis of its intrinsic nature) [and then use it] as a proof, seems far-fetched. This is because it is not *manṣūṣ* (textually proven) – as in the case of a pig. The ruling is based on *ẓannīyyāt* (hypothetical proof). There is therefore no reason for considering it [human skin and flesh] *najis*.

There are many things which are *harām*, yet not *najis*. If we were to ponder over it, we will conclude that, to hold the view of *karāmat* together with *najāsāt*, actually entails a combination of two opposites (*ijtimā' mutadādayn*). Apart from this – nowhere in the Shari'ah do we find anything which is both sanctified (*mukarram*) and *najis* at the same time.

In addition to this, the author of *Hidāyah* has gone one step further. He states that the *sūr* (left-over drinking water) of man is *tāhir*. Then he provides the 'illat for this, saying *لأنه متولد من لحم طاهر* (because it is formed from flesh which is *tāhir*). This seems to be a slip-up, because he first provides a proof for its *najāsāt* and then he mentions its *tahārat*. Thus, if the skin and flesh are *najis*, there is no reason for considering the *sūr* to be *tāhir*, [it should also be classified as *najis*] and the 'illat should be *لكونه في معدنه* (because the *sūr* is mixed with the saliva which emanates from the flesh [which is *najis*]).

Based upon the above, we should apply the rule of '*tahārat* of the *sūr*' to all animals of prey. Only pigs should be excluded. Here we find another dichotomy: The *najāsāt* is considered *tāhir* while it is in its source. Thus, the flesh of animals of prey is *tāhir* in principle *لكونه في معدنه*. If this is the case, its *sūr* should also be *tāhir* *طاهر* *لكونه متولدا من لحم طاهر* – yet it is classified *najis*. The entire issue has thus been reversed.

If the basis for the *tahārat* and *najāsāt* of man is based upon whether he is alive or dead, then this ruling will apply to all animals of prey as well. In short, I have numerous doubts regarding this issue. I have merely written down the gist of it.³⁹

³⁹ This question was posed by Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib rahimahullāh.

Answer:

These are not doubts regarding that which has been stated in *Hidāyah*, but the mere 'whys' of your own assumptions. How will you then be able to understand all this? If you had any misgivings regarding the statements which were made in *Hidāyah*, the answers to them would have been easy. However, you are asking for the 'illat (plural of 'illat – reasons) behind the commentaries and statements of the past scholars. Nevertheless, I shall write something for your sake.

Nowhere on page 24 of *Hidāyah* is it explicitly stated that *karāmat* is the 'illat for *najāsah*. You assumed this yourself and therefore raised an objection to it. This is the reason for your doubt ...

The author said:

كل إهاب دبغ فقد طهر وجازت الصلوة والوضوء فيه إلا جلد الخنزير
والأدمي الخ

"Every skin which is tanned is pure. *Salāh* and *wudū'* with such skin is permissible, except for the skins of pigs and humans..."

We learn from the *matn* (text) that the skin of man cannot be purified through tanning. The *shāriḥ* (commentator) then explained the *karāmat* of human skin. Therefore you assumed that, since human skin is considered *najis* because of its *karāmat*, it cannot be *tāhir*. That is why you expressed your objection in this regard. In essence, the above text is actually a text from a *Hadīth*, but the exception was not mentioned in the *Hadīth*. Although you will be able to learn a lot if I were to explain this *Hadīth*, the explanation will be too long. Therefore I will not go into a detailed explanation. Instead, I will explain what the *shāriḥ* meant.

When a human skin is removed, it will either be from a person who is dead, or from one who is alive. If it is the skin of a dead person, it will be *najis hukmī* due to death (*maut*). If the skin is removed from

a living person, it will be *najis* based on the following Hadīth:

ما أبين عن الحي فهو ميت

“Anything removed from a living person is classified as dead.”

It will thus be *najis* because it is considered *maytah* (carrion). If the skin is removed gradually from a living person, he will eventually die in the process and then the skin will be separated from him. Thus it will also be *najis* on the basis of *maut*.

Man can be classified dead, *maytah* and *najis* – like other *maytah* animals. However, man enjoys the *sharāfat* (sanctity) of being able to be purified by *ghusl*, as opposed to other animals. The *najāsah* which he acquired because of *maut* is referred to by the author of *Hidāyah* as *يطهر إلا جلد الأدمي فإنه لا يطهر* (except for the skin of man which cannot be purified). He continued by giving the reason as *karāmat* – that is, if this [*karāmat*] were to warrant *ṭahārat*, people would have used it [the human skin] and would thereby have violated its sanctity. That is why the Sharī'ah prohibited its *ṭahārat*. There is thus no reason for any doubt or misgiving regarding this. *Karāmat* is not the *munajjis* (the cause of *najāsah*). *Maut* is the *munajjis*. *Karāmat* is the *māni'* (obstacle) in the path of *ṭahārat* because *ṭahārat* is the *mūjib ihānat* [that which causes or leads to the violation of sanctity (of the human body)]. This means that *ihānat* is in conflict with *karāmat*.

In short, the Sharī'ah considers *karāmat* [sanctity] to be a *māni'* [obstacle] in the path of *ṭahārat* [purity] for the sake of avoiding *ihānat* [violation of sanctity] through *ṭahārat*. It is not a *mūjib* [cause] of *najāsah* [impurity] as you assumed.

If you are not convinced, then listen:

The *istithnā'* (exception) does not apply to *طَهَرَ* alone, but also to

طهر وجاز. The permissibility of using all [skins] was gauged from this and it would have meant *إذا دبغ حل استعماله* (if any skin is tanned, it is permissible to use it). An *istithnā'* was therefore added, and the reason for the impermissibility of a pig's skin was given as 'due to the fact that it is *najis al-'ayn* (intrinsically impure)', and for human skin as 'due to *karāmat*'.

This explanation completely removes all doubt and the generalization thereof will be in line with both opinions. That is, if human skin is tanned, some scholars consider it *tāhir* but impermissible to use. Others do not even accept its *tahārat*. The fact is that human skin and pig skin cannot be separated from the body and the thin layer of skin which is removed cannot be tanned. Some rules of the jurists are hypothetical. The condition of 'being capable' can be clearly understood from the following *Hadīth*:

كل إهاب يصلح للدباغة إذا دبغ فقد طهر

*"If every skin which is capable of being tanned is tanned, it is permissible."*⁴⁰

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 12⁴¹

This unworthy servant, Khalīl Aḥmad, was greatly honoured upon receiving this letter. It was beyond expectation and an unanticipated bounty from the master, refuge, means of Allāh's Mercy upon the world, the sanctuary for the *murīds*, the refuge for those seeking

⁴⁰ This investigation is the opinion of those '*ulamā'* who were present in the eras during which they had very basic tools and means of tanning. Now, many new tools and means are available which have made it possible to tan pig skins. The exception of the jurists have thus become inapplicable. Consequently, *Hadrat rahīmahullāh* mentioned this himself on one occasion.

⁴¹ This is a follow-up to the previous answer.

rectitude, the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the Qutb of our time, the *mujtahid* of our era, Hadrat Maulā'ī Murshidī Maulānā Maulwī Rashīd Alīmad Sāhib, may Allāh ﷻ perpetuate his blessings upon the world.

Your letter is a source of crowning pride to this worthless servant. Bearing in mind Hadrat's other preoccupations, I expected to receive the reply after some time and the answers to be concise. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, the answers were as I had anticipated. I am at a loss over which words and statements I should use to express my gratitude.

Despite Hadrat's other preoccupations and physical weakness, Hadrat bore the burden of replying to my letter. After performing the *ṣalāh*, I spontaneously made *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to bless Hadrat in his knowledge, actions and life and to enable us to continue benefiting from Hadrat.

Through Hadrat's kindness, I understood most of the answers and many of my doubts have been removed. However, I still have some doubts regarding some of the answers. I am writing this after obtaining Hadrat's permission, and I am extremely remorseful for having wasted Hadrat's time due to my lack of understanding. My doubt concerning *karāmat* [mentioned in the previous letter] has been removed. However, the doubt which remains in this regard is as follows:

The flesh of animals of prey is *tāhir* while they are alive. With regard to موت ما يعيش (the death of something which is living), the author of *Hidāyah* states: لا يفسد الماء.

He provides the following as proof:

لأنه مات في معدنه فلا يعطى له حكم النجاسة كبيضه حام محها دما

Since it died in its source, it will not be classified as *najis* – as in the case of the yolk of an egg turning to blood. In other words, since the *najāsah* is in its source, the egg will not be classified as *najis*.

One can clearly gauge from this that, as long as the flesh of animals of prey is in its source, it will be considered *tāhir*. Since the *tahārat* and *najāsah* of substances act as opposites, the *sūr* (left-over drinking water) of these animals ought to be *tāhir* as well لأنه متولد من لحم طاهر [because it is mixed with the saliva which emanates from the flesh which is *tāhir*].

However, this does not apply to a pig and *maytah* (an animal which died a natural death) because every part of a pig – whether alive or dead, internal or external – is *najis al-'ayn* (intrinsically impure) and the same applies to *maytah*. These two are regarded to either have no *ma'din* (source) or, if they do, the *ma'din* itself is impure. Apart from pigs and *maytah*, the outer skin of animals of prey and other animals is not considered *najis* while they are alive. Instead, it is classified as *tāhir*. This skin is the *ma'din* of their flesh and thus the flesh is *tāhir*. However, the ruling with regard to their *sūr* is the opposite. It is classified as *najis*. I did mention this doubt in my previous letter together with all my other doubts [but probably did not express it clearly].

Answer:

Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib, as-salāmu 'alaykum.

The remaining doubts which you have are as a result of lack of reflection and contemplation. If something is *najis*, it is *najis* everywhere. However, as long as it remains in its original place and *ma'din* (source), the rules of *najāsah* are not applied to it. The rules are applied when it moves out of its original place or source. For example, *najāsah* is found inside man's testicles and *najis* blood is found in the veins, yet these parts are not classified as carriers of *najāsah*. The moment it [blood or semen] leaves its original place

and comes into contact with another part of the body, the rule of *najāsah* is applied to it and it is classified as 'carriers of *najāsah*'.

Similarly, the rule of *najāsah* is not applied to the flesh of animals of prey – as long as the flesh remains in its source. For example, if a person places such an animal on his neck and performs *ṣalāh* with it, he will not be labelled as 'a carrier of *najāsah*' and his *ṣalāh* will be completely valid. However, the moment it dies, it will be considered *najis* because it is now classified as *maytah*. Flesh which is separated from an animal while it is alive is also considered *najis*.

I am astonished at how you could make *qiyās* (analogical deduction) of this on *sūr* (left over drinking water), because the flesh was *najis* and the saliva was *najis*, even though the place or source was not under the ruling of *najāsah*. When the saliva mixed with the water, the saliva became separated from its source. It thus became *najis* and the water also became *najis*. The first mistake you made was to think that the saliva is pure while it is in its source. In fact, it is *najis*, but the rule of *najāsah* is not applied to it [until it leaves its source]. The second mistake you made was that you did not ponder over the fact that the saliva first separated from its source before it mixed with the water. Why should it not be considered *najis* and how can this contaminated water be *ṭāhir*?

Question 13

I refer to the book *Hidāyah* (Mustafā'ī edition, p.36):

With regard to النائم المار على الماء (a sleeping person who passes by water), the book states that such a person's *tayammum* has broken because he had passed a source of water [while sleeping]. Thereafter, with regard to الرجل ناسي ناسي الماء في الرحل (a person who forgets that he has water in his saddlebag), the author says that such a person's *ṣalāh* does not have to be repeated [even though he was forgetful].

However, [to my understanding], the excuse of a sleeping person is more valid than that of the one who forgets, because sleep essentially causes forgetfulness while the opposite is not true. Thus, the sleeping person's inability to use water is more obvious. As per the proof which has been provided, the breaking of the sleeping person's *tayammum* does not make sense and the two issues seem to conflict one another. Although the authentic narration states that *tayammum* does not break, I find it surprising that the author of *Hidāyah* had left it aside and brought together two conflicting narrations.

The first explanation which is required is the '*illat* (reason) for the breaking of *tayammum*. Secondly, on what basis was this statement made? Thereafter the contradiction needs to be removed.

Answer:

The difference between *nisyān* (forgetting) and *naum* (sleeping) is that *nisyān* is not *bi ikhtiyār al-'abd* (by the choice of a person). Therefore, in such a situation, the basis would be the absence of water. What I mean is that both *saḡar* (journey) and *nisyān* are obstacles in the path of obtaining water because, in both journey and forgetfulness, there is nothing to remind a person to look for water.

Because of the absence of water and the strong possibility of not being able to find water, even if efforts were to be made to search for it, *tayammum* would be permitted. As for the sleeping person ... if he should fall asleep after he had performed *tayammum*, it would be as if his 'falling asleep' was *ikhtiyārī* (within his choice). If one is in a state of sleep, the possibility of searching for water is removed and so is the possibility that you may not find water. He is therefore considered to be *qādir* (one who possesses the ability) in the sense that he fell asleep forgetfully and wasted his ability (*qudrat*) [to search for water].

As for your query concerning whether this narration is strong or weak ... that is not an issue. It is possible that the author of *Hidāyah* did not know this narration. He was a human after all. Alternatively, this narration may have been strong according to him for some or other reason. This is not surprising, because it is quite possible that latter generations were able to ascertain the strength of the other narration. That is all.

Question 14

I did not understand the answer you provided because it is based on this difference: “*Nisyān* is not *bi ikhtiyār al-'abd* and thus it is *māni'-e-qudrat*. *Naum* is *bi ikhtiyār al-'abd* – he slept by his own choice – and thus he wasted his *qudrat*. Therefore the *māni'-e-qudrat* is not *hukmī*.”

Upon reflection it becomes obvious that neither *naum* [sleep] nor *nisyān* [forgetfulness] are *ikhtiyārī* [within one's choice]. Instead, *naum* surpasses *nisyān* in not being *ikhtiyārī*. If a person makes a firm intention to keep something in mind [and to remember it], it is possible for him not to be overcome by *nisyān*. On the other hand, *naum* is from among the *sittah durūrīyyah* (the six essentials or inevitables). At times, it is beyond one's power to remain awake. Although only the *dawā'ī* (motives and causes) of both are *ikhtiyārī*, in the case [where one is overpowered by sleep] the *dawā'ī* of sleep are beyond the realm of *ikhtiyārī*.

Allāh ﷻ likens non-*ikhtiyārī* (uncontrollable) sleep to death:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا

Rasūlullāh ﷺ says that the excuse of [over] sleeping is similar to a person forgetting [to perform *ṣalāh*]:

من نام عن صلاة أو نسيها فليصلها إذا ذكرها

The author of *Hidāyah* also accepts Imām Shāfi'ī's proof in favour of sleep being a more acceptable excuse than *nisyān*:

والعذر أبلغ لعدم القصد

(The excuse [of sleep] is more acceptable as a non-*ikhtiyārī* excuse).

As for (1) spending all one's energies in search of water, (2) total absence of water and (3) the possibility of not finding water ... these may be considered as follows:

(1) If the condition of spending one's energies is not found in a *nāsī* (one who forgets), it is not found in a *nā'im* (sleeping person) either. Both are equal with regard to the fact that they cannot search for water. In fact, it is a little more in the *nā'im* because he is not conscious [he is asleep]. The issue of the intrinsic absence of water, with relation to how far away it is, which is connected to the *nā'im*, is found here, whereas the issue of the intrinsic absence of water with relation to the saddlebag which is connected to the *nāsī* ...

I cannot understand this because the saddlebag, in reality, is the source of water for the traveller. Therefore, in essence, water is present and not absent when applied to the *nāsī* and the possibility of not finding water has been based on this. Thus, all three conditions [listed above] are absent with relation to the *nāsī*. As for the *nā'im* ... the first condition cannot be found while the second and third cannot. Hence, even on this basis, the excuse of the *nā'im* is more valid than the excuse of the *nāsī*.

After accepting the above difference – when the actual ability [to obtain water] is gone and the [sleeping] person is as if he is a dead person or an inanimate object [and not aware of his surroundings], it is strange to classify him legally [*hukman*] *qādir* [able]. For example, if a person severs his hands and legs and becomes *ma'dhūr* (excused) [from having to obtain water], or a person eats

something and consequently suffers from a certain illness which is exacerbated by the use of water, then – although *qudrat* (ability) has been removed from him by his personal choice (*ikhtiyār*) – we cannot say that he is legally *qādir*, that his *tayammum* has broken, or that it is not permissible for him to make *tayammum*.

The case of a sleeping person would be similar. Although he [may have] slept by his own choice, since he has genuinely become *ma'dhūr* (excused) [from obtaining water], we cannot classify him as *qādir*. If we were to classify him as *qādir* we will actually be claiming *ijtimā'-e-mutanāfisīyayn* (simultaneous presence of two rivals, or two opposites) and according to Mullā al-Haddād (the commentator who wrote the *hāshiyah* – marginal notes), in all three answers, sleep is (1) an excuse from man, (2) an internal matter (*amr bātinī*) which cannot be known (*lā yūqafu 'alayh*), or (3) it is rare for the external form of sleep to take place.

On the other hand, *nisyān* is unclear and does not remove the confusion in my heart. Nevertheless, I do not understand it. Kindly explain with a bit more clarity so that my understanding may be freed from confusion.

Answer:

I did not give any preference to the issue concerning the *nā'im*. You asked me to explain the *'illat* (reason) for *tayammum* breaking and on what basis the *Hidāyah* has written this. I then explained this and wrote at the end that the issue is not on the strength or weakness of the narration. However, you assumed the role of a claimant (*mudda't*) and started presenting proofs against it. This will be correct if the present narration is weak and the one opposing it is strong. The reasons for their strength will be based upon other narrations, even though these may be incomplete.

The issue was about our understanding *nisyān* to be stronger based upon certain grounds, even though it may be equal to *naum* after looking at the issue in-depth. This is stated in *Fath* and other books.

Thus, my object was to explain the obvious difference and I did not do so after an in-depth study of it.

[The difference is as follows]: The *nāsī* is awake [not asleep] and has been ordered to look for water. He looked for it as much as he could and his *nisyān* [forgetfulness] absolved him of the order. Your assumption was that it was also *wājib* upon him to look in the saddlebag – because water is most likely stored there – and because he did not look there, his *tayammum* is not valid. This assumption is refuted thus:

Water is essentially and most likely found in an inhabited place and a place where one is settled and not in the desert while on a journey. This is the fact of the matter in such a situation. It is most obvious and denying it amounts to engaging in futile discussions. Thus, he did not display any shortcoming in his search for water.

As for the *nā'im* ... although he was addressed (*mukhāṭab*), he did not search for it because he was unable to search for it. He found himself in a state which is contrary to searching. He can therefore not be excused. Further, I referred to *naum* as *mithl-e-ikhtiyārī* and not *ikhtiyārī* – there is a difference and this difference has an effect on the consequences, even though there may be other factors involved. If a fasting person eats forgetfully, his fast does not break, but if he eats while he is asleep, it breaks. This is the difference, even though an opposing narration may replace this.

There was no need for you to go through such pains to ask for proof to show a difference between the two. Anyway, the proofs you provided in order to show similarity between the two are weak. The Hadīth [which you quoted] cannot be used to prove similarity between *nisyān* and *naum*, because it [the Hadīth] was essentially provided for a different reason. In the Hadīth each one of them is addressed. However, the strength of '*nisyān* as a more valid excuse' in the proof which you mentioned, was provided for another reason altogether.

Similarly, the 'death' of the soul of a sleeping person is through the Order of Allāh ﷻ. The reason for this is that everything exists by the permission of Allāh ﷻ. The strength of the excuse of *nisyān* is thus determined by the fact that the person fulfilled the order to search [for water] while the *nā'im* (sleeping person) was 'ātil (inactive, and did not fulfil the command of searching).

The principle that is used is: *والساکت لا ینسب إلیه شیء* (nothing can be attributed to a person who is absolved). Based upon this, the excuse of the *nā'im* is more valid. However, we will still have to consider that, when other stronger narrations are accepted, they will replace all other proofs and the proofs of this strong narration will be considered weak.

Nevertheless, my purpose was to explain the outward preference and not the real or essential basis for the preference. Why did you not understand this, and why did you waste your efforts in removing it? Too many investigations are futile. I have therefore written this much only, although there was no need to write this much at all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 15 :

Page 16, line 15 [*Hidāyah*] states:

والوظيفة في هذه الأعضاء تعبدية الخ

If the meaning of *wudū'* is taken from the words:

والوظيفة في هذه الأعضاء - it would contradict the previous text which states وهذا القدر في الأصل معقول الخ because there, when giving a reply to the proof of Imām Shāfi'ī, the statement:

ولأن غسل الخ was made. It is as if the *wudū'* itself is *ta'abbudī*. However, confining oneself to the four parts (face, hands, head and feet) is beyond our understanding, (غير معقول), while here, based on the above, *wudū'* itself is considered *ta'abbudī*.

Answer:

The author of *Hidāyah* has stated previously that, ما خرج من سبيلين (whatever comes out of the two private parts, breaks *wudū'*). It is thus completely معقول (understood) that whatever comes out is impurity. By the same token, if any impurity comes out of any other place [part of the body], *wudū'* will also be broken and the body will be regarded as impure. This is understood معقول, but to wash the الأجزاء الأربعة (four limbs – face, arms, head and feet) during *wudū'* is غير معقول (beyond our understanding). [This is because, if an impurity (like blood for example) comes out of our shoulder, our understanding tells us that we need to wash our shoulder, yet – in *wudū'* – we have to wash the four limbs in order to purify ourselves, and not our shoulder. This is beyond our understanding.]

The second point is that the Sharī'ah has prescribed general water for purifying ourselves (in *wudū'* etc.). Allāh ﷻ says: رَفِانٌ لَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمْ صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا (“If you do not find water, then make *tayammum* with pure sand.”) Thus, according to the Sharī'ah, purifiers are water (and if no water is found) then pure sand [can be used]. Seeing as no other liquids have been mentioned as a purifier, we come to know that only water is a purifier for *wudū'*, and no other liquids.

Furthermore, the question arises: Imām Shāfi'ī states that in the case of *najāsat-e-Haqīqī* (actual, solid impurity), only water can be used as a purifier, whereas Imām Hanafī states that other liquids can also be used. So, which is the correct opinion? Here our intelligence – and this is معقول (understood) – informs us that purity from physical *najāsat* (impurity) can be achieved by using [any] other pure liquids, since the physical form of *najāsat* (impurity) will be removed.

However, in the case of *najāsat-e-hukmī* (impure by Command) –

where *wuḍū'* is required – then only water can be used as it is غير معقول (beyond our understanding) as to why the four limbs must be washed during *wuḍū'* and not the place where the *najāsah* has emitted from (such as the private parts).



Allāh, Allāh! What can be said about Hadrat's insightful knowledge in this brief and concise reply? His deep knowledge is gushing forth like a fountain from every word and every letter. If the reader only knew in what condition, and during which period of his life Hadrat gave these answers, he would be even more astounded. Several people who were close to Hadrat had passed away one after the other during those days. First he had to bear the painful death of Maulwī 'Alā' ad-Dīn. This was followed by the death of Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib's wife and son, Farīd ad-Dīn. A few other deaths also occurred in quick succession.

After replying to the last question, Hadrat added the following: "You must have heard the sad news of the passing away of Maulwī 'Alā' ad-Dīn. And now, Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib's wife and son, Farīd ad-Dīn have also passed away. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon them and pardon them. Maulānā [Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib] had gone through so much pain – six or seven of his progeny had passed away and he had also lost his wife. Another tragedy which took place is the passing away of the lawyer, Hāfiz Muḥammad Sa'īd, who was suffering from cholera. He was the brother-in-law of Maulwī Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib. Oh, how profitless this world is, and how heedless we are!"

Look at the doubts and misgivings which the '*allāmah*' of the time, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib mudda zilluhu [*rahimahullāh*] had regarding an intricate juristic masterpiece like *Hidāyah*. Then consider Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī's replies which were dictated during the above-mentioned tragic period. Even today, an

extremely intelligent person would have to deeply contemplate and reflect on these replies.

From one letter, we presented three questions and their replies to the reader. The same letter contains about ten other questions of the same level. We merely wanted to present a few examples in this biography. For that reason we have not quoted all the questions here. I quoted a few of these to portray Hadrat's juristic acumen and his ability to explain the 'whys' of certain injunctions. I have now come to the end of the fifteen questions which I had promised to quote.

I now offer the reader a preview of his other academic contributions. I would loathe to exclude any of the other valuable and unique pearls, but I am forced to do so. If this biography becomes too lengthy, the majority of Hadrat's associates will not be able to purchase it, because they are very poor. Please make *du'ā'* that Allāh ﷻ enables me to present the other questions and answers at a later stage.



Questions posed by Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpurī

Notwithstanding what I just said, I cannot go forward without quoting the questions on the Qur'ān and Hadīth which were posed by Shaykh Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Maulwī Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib and which Hadrat replied to in writing. Even here, I am going to force myself and restrict myself to quoting only ten examples. From these ten questions and answers, the reader will be able to learn some of the academic intricacies which can rarely be found anywhere else. Although these academic questions and answers are more for the '*ulamā'*', the ordinary reader will certainly learn and enjoy some interesting facts, depending on his own capability,

intelligence and understanding.

It is for academic points, such as these, that a true seeker of knowledge would be prepared to sacrifice his life and wealth and which he would consider a means of pride for his *Dīn* and *dunyā*. I appeal to the reader to study these intricate discussions several times, with absolute concentration and in seclusion. He should have nothing else on his mind. He should sit with purity of heart and body, be conscious of his closeness to Allāh ﷻ and then – gather the flowers from the Muḥammadī ﷺ garden.

والله الهادي هو حسبي ونعم الوكيل

*"Allāh ﷻ Alone is the One who guides. He is sufficient for me.
What an excellent Dispenser of affairs is He!"*

Question 1

Allāh ﷻ says:

وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْجِبَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ

"There are some rocks from which rivers flow."

وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقُّ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ

*"There are some rocks which split and water issues
forth from them."*

The above two verses appear to be the same in meaning. What, then, is the benefit in repeating them?

Furthermore, in the verse:

وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ

"And there are those which fall down out of the fear of Allāh."

The falling down of the rock is considered to be the fruit [or consequence] of the fear of Allāh ﷻ. I do not understand the sequence of *tafajjur* (flowing), *tashaqquq* (splitting) and *hubūt* (falling) in the Qur'ān.

Furthermore, what is the correlation between مَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (Allāh is not unaware of your deeds) and the next verse: أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ الْخ⁴²

Answer:

(1) *Tafajjur al-anhār*: The flowing of rivers refers to the highest level of effect [which the fear of Allāh ﷻ has on them] in the sense that rivers gush forth and flow from certain rocks. (2) *Tashaqquq*: The splitting of the rock and water issuing forth from it, refers to a lower level of effect. (3) *Hubūt*: refers to a level which is lower than the previous level. The sequence is thus from highest to lowest – that is to say, some rocks enable rivers to gush forth from them,

⁴² Both verses are quoted below to put them into proper perspective:
ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْجَوَارِثِ أَوْ أَمْدٍ فَسَوْءٌ وَإِنْ مِنْ الْجَبَارِثِ لَمَا يَنْفَجِرُ مِنْهُ
الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنْ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْفَقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنْ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ.

"Then your hearts became hard thereafter, so they became like rocks or even harder. Of rocks are those from which rivers flow. Of them are those which split and water issues forth from them. And of them are those which fall down out of the fear of Allāh. And Allāh is not unaware of your deeds." (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 74)
الطَّمَعُونَ أَنْ يُزَيِّنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَحْرُفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوا
وَهُمْ يَخْلَعُونَ.

"Now, O Muslims! Do you still hope that they would believe you when there was a group of them who used to hear the word of Allāh and thereafter changed it intentionally while they knew?" (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 75)

some of them split and water flows from them and others merely fall down. However, despite witnessing these splendid miracles, manifestations of Allāh's Power and clear favours – let alone their having the highest level of effect on the Banī Isrā'īl, they did not even cause the least effect on them. Their situation is therefore worse than the lowest level of rocks.

(1) The rock which causes rivers to gush forth is affected on the highest level and in its fear [of Allāh ﷻ], water gushes forth from it all the time. A large number of Allāh's Creation derives every type of benefit from it. (2) The rock which splits is, itself, affected to a certain level and its water benefits the creation, one after another [but not a large number of the creation at once]. Even if the creation did not benefit at all, the rock certainly derived benefit from its fear. (3) The rock which fell down acquired the benefits of humility and fear even if no one else benefited from it. It was certainly affected and obeyed the order of Allāh ﷻ. However, the Banī Isrā'īl remained headstrong in their disobedience. Their false plots and swift utterances were all futile and baseless. "*Allāh is not unaware of your deeds.*" If these people are so obstinate and even worse than rocks, then based on the principle الولد سر لأبيه (like father like son), can you expect to guide such a nation?

أفتطمعون أن يؤمنوا لكم

(Now, O Muslims! Do you still hope that they would believe you ...)
Was salām.

Question 2

A Muslim set aside some money with the intention of either using it to pay a bribe, or to cover a grave with a sheet.

When is the prohibition (*hurmat*) of this money established?

Is it also prohibited for the owner of the money – i.e the one who intends using it to pay a bribe or cover a grave with a sheet – to use

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this money?

If it is prohibited, how can it be correct to order the person who receives the bribe to return the money to the one who has bribed him?

Further, if a *sā'ibah* animal (an animal which is left free in the name of anyone apart from Allāh ﷻ) is let free, when is its prohibition established?

Does the owner have the right to take back [or cancel] his *harām* intention?

I hope you would explain the meaning of مَا أَهْلٌ لِّغَيْرِ اللَّهِ

Answer:

If a Muslim sets aside money with the intention of paying a bribe or seeking to gain proximity to anything other than Allāh ﷻ (*taqarrub li ghayrillāh* - e.g. covering a grave with a sheet), this money is not *harām*. If he uses this money for himself, gives it to someone as a gift without the above intentions, or gives it for the sake of Allāh ﷻ; then all these acts will be permissible. His [original] intention will be *laghw* (futile) even though he may have committed a sin or *shirk* (an act of polytheism) before spending the money.

If he hands over the money to another person with the original intention, the transaction will be complete, but, because it is an invalid transaction, the money will be *harām* for all except for the owner in the case where it is returned to him. The same applies to sheets for graves and anything which is pledged in the name of anyone other than Allāh ﷻ, irrespective of whether the pledged item is an animal or not.

As for the animal [which was let free in the name of someone apart from Allāh ﷻ] ... if the owner slaughtered it with the same intention but said *Bismillāh*, it will be *harām* because it is classified a *maytah* (carrion) even though it has not left his ownership.

The flesh is classified as carrion and its skin will be pure after

tanning. It will be permissible to use the tanned skin and there will be no sin in using it.

As for an animal which is let free with the intention that "anyone who takes it shall be its owner" ... its prohibition will be established the moment it is taken by someone. As we stated above, the transaction will be complete. Now, if the person who took it slaughters it with the intention that it is a *sā'ibah*, it is classified as carrion. Its flesh is carrion and *najis* (impure). Its skin is pure but *harām* for use by all.

If the above animal is not slaughtered with the above intention, but slaughtered solely for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and there was no intention whatsoever of respect to anyone else, the animal is not a *maytah* but it is *harām*. It is *harām* to use its flesh and skin, but it is not *najis*. It is like *harām* food and is classified *harām* because of the baseless transaction (*'aqd-e-bātil*).

If the animal was not set free with the above intention but set free in the ownership of impure spirits (*arwāḥ khabīthah*), the person who takes possession of the animal will be classified as *ghāṣib* (an illegal usurper) in relation to the owner [impure spirits] because it had not come out of the ownership of the *musayyab* (the person in whose name it was set free). If the person slaughters it, the rules of *ghasab* (usurped wealth) will apply. The prohibition of *ihlāl* (setting free in the name of someone) will not apply.

Conclusion: (1) With regard to the prohibition of an animal which was slaughtered out of respect for someone other than Allāh ﷻ. Such an animal is *harām* in all situations – whether the owner slaughters it or someone else slaughters it. (2) The prohibition of an animal which is pledged in the name of someone other than Allāh ﷻ: Transfer of ownership cannot be established without taking possession of it.

Inshā Allāh, the above answers are correct as per *Qā'idah Fissah*. I have not seen what others have written in this regard and do not have the time to refer to other books at present. Since the tenth I have also not been feeling too well. Cholera is a rare disease here, but quite common in Ambheta [the home town of *Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmād Sahāranpūrī rahimahullāh*]. The passing away of *Muhammad Hāshim's* is a great admonition.

Question 3

The author of *Khazānatur Riwāyāt* writes in his book: "Zayd employed 'Umar as his labourer. They both went on a journey from one place to another. On their way, they came to 'Umar's [the labourer's] hometown (*waṭan-e-aslī*). 'Umar will remain a *musāfir* because of the rule of subservience (*tab'īyyah*) [to his employer]. He will not be classified a *muqīm* (non-traveller), even though he is in his hometown. He will therefore perform *qasr ṣalāh* (the shorter *ṣalāh* which is performed by a traveller)."

What is *Hadrat's* opinion in this regard?

Answer:

I am of the opinion that *waṭan-e-aslī* will be considered and he will not be classified as a *musāfir*. He must perform the full *ṣalāh* and not make *qasr*. The author of *Khazānah* erred in his reply. It is not correct to consider a *musāfir* to be a *musāfir* [simply] because he considers himself to be one. Instead, a *musāfir* is one in whom the quality of *safar* (a journey) is found and a *waṭan-e-aslī* is the opposite of *safar*. It is *wājib* for the initial *ishtiqaq* (derivation) of a *mushtaq* (derived word) to be established through a *fi'l* (verb) so that the *haqīqī* (essential) meaning can be correct. If not, it will become a *mujāz* (metaphor, figurative expression) and it will contradict the original meaning.

The author of *Khazānah* derived his view from *نوى الإقامة* (he made an intention of becoming a *muqīm*) on the basis that he has to be a person who made an intention. It should be clear that the

tābi' (the one who is subservient – in this case it is 'Umar) is a *Sāhib-e-nīyyat* (one who can make an intention). This is because the statement which was made by the jurists – والمعتبر نية المتبوع الخ (the intention of the *matbū'* is considered) – clearly means that the intention of the *tābi'* is not considered, but it does not mean that he (*tābi'*) is not a *Sāhib-e-nīyyat* at all. However, the intention of the *matbū'* is afforded preference because the *tābi'* cannot do anything without the *matbū'*. Thus, the intention alone is not sufficient.

The intention of the *tābi'* is the issue of contention. In other words, the question is whether he will act on the intention of the *matbū'* or against it. If there is a doubt about the intention of the *matbū'* at a particular place, this intention will also not be considered. If the *amīr* of the Muslim army makes the intention of *qiyām* in *dār al-harb*, it will not be considered because the place is under doubt – not because he is not *Sāhib-e-nīyyat*.

The *Durr-e-Mukhtār* considers the original debtor of a creditor to be *tābi'*. He then writes that, if the creditor catches the *musāfir* debtor in his (the creditor's) place of residence and the debtor is a *muflis* (insolvent), he will remain a *musāfir*. However, if the debtor is wealthy (not insolvent) and intends paying off his debt before a period of fifteen days elapse [before he can be classified as a *muqīm*], he will remain a *musāfir*.

Now you see, here the *tābi'* is also considered to be a *Sāhib-e-nīyyat*.

الصبي إذا خرج مع أبيه فبلغ في أثناء الطريق وقد بقي إلى المقصد أقل
من ثلاثة أيام لا يقصر

“If a boy accompanies his father on a journey and reaches puberty on the way while there is less than three days before they reach their destination, the boy will not make *qasr*.”

This, despite the principle ابن بار تابع (an obedient son is *tābi'* to his father). However, this boy is now *mukhāṭab* (addressed and liable to follow the injunctions of the Sharī'ah) because he has entered puberty. He will only be a *musāfir* if a period of three day's travelling remain. The original intention is not considered and his original subservience to his father does not help him in this regard.

Based upon this, if a *musāfir* remains in a place for the minimum period of *qiyām* and employs a *muqīm* employee, the *muqīm* will not be classified a *musāfir* in subservience to his *musāfir* employer (تبعاً للمسافر). This is because *tab'īyyat-e-safar* (subservience in travelling) applies after one is classified a *musāfir*. Based upon this, after a person is classified a *musāfir*, it is essential for a *safar* to remain for *tab'īyyat-e-safar* to be valid. This issue is not about *watan-e-aslī* as assumed by the author of *Khazānah*. Rather, it is the issue of *watan-e-iqāmah* in the sense that there has to be an intention when considering a journey to have ended or to still be considered a journey. When there are two conflicting intentions, preference is given to the stronger one and not to *watan-e-aslī* — which is the opposite of *safar* and has nothing to do with intention. Opposites cannot be combined. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 4

There seems to be a contradiction between the Hadīth:

كل مولود يولد على الفطرة (Every child is born on the natural *Dīn* of Islam) and the Hadīth which relates the story of Khadir ﷺ and his murder of a youngster. This Hadīth [which relates the story of the youngster] states وكان طبع يوم كافرا (his disposition was on *kāfir* the day he arrived into this world). I do not see any reason for excluding this youngster from the general principle [of the first Hadīth] — on account of which Khadir ﷺ killed him — nor is the contradiction removed.

Answer:

Rasūlullāh ﷺ personally removed this contradiction by using the word طبع in one Hadīth and ولد in the other Hadīth. There is a clear difference between the two. The word طبع refers to a certain power or ability which is placed in a person's natural disposition and innate nature. And the words ولد عليه mean 'to be born while intermingled with a certain form'. Therefore it is clear that every new-born is born on *fiṭrah*. Although there are differences of interpretation in the translation of *fiṭrah*, the essence of all is *Dīn* and Islam. Thus, the affirmation of *tauḥīd*, which was taken from the entire progeny of Ādam عليه السلام in the '*ālam al-arwāḥ*' and which was given by all – disbelievers, polytheists, sinners and Muslims – refers to *fiṭrah* and this is the natural disposition with which an infant is born. Until the time of birth, there is no rejection or opposition to the affirmation which is conveyed by the word بلى (indeed) in the Qur'ān. Thus, every infant is born with this *fiṭrah* at the time of birth, and does not reject it in any way.

فقال عليه السلام كل مولود يولد على الفطرة

It is obvious that Shayṭān and all the disbelievers had also affirmed *tauḥīd* at the time [in the '*ālam al-arwāḥ*']. In like manner, the youngster in the story of Khadir عليه السلام had also affirmed it. He was also born on the above-mentioned *fiṭrah* – then why should he be excluded from it? At the same time, all the disbelievers, as well as the youngster in question were مطبوع على الكفر i.e. their innate nature and intrinsic aptitude was to consider *kufr* to be good and to act against the orders of Allāh ﷻ. This is manifested through their emulation of their parents, their emulation of others and at times it issues forth from within their selves and their innate nature cannot be stopped from manifesting itself. This is what is referred to by the statement:

"If you hear of a mountain moving from its place, you can believe

it, but if you hear of a person's *jibillat* (natural disposition) changing, do not believe it."

Thus, the Hadīth أي كما طبع سائر كان الغلام طبع كافر will mean (the youngster was disposed to *kufir* just like all the other disbelievers). *Jibillat* does not need to make *taqlīd* (emulation) of anyone. *Taqlīd* is actually the spark and if a person's *jibillat* has the slightest predisposition towards it, it will be ignited. In fact, *jibillat* can become manifest even without any *taqlīd*.

As for the predisposition which is not within one's *jibillat* ... one will need intense influence in order to be affected by it. The Qur'ān and Hadīth says: The parents of the youngster are believers. If this youngster, who was مجبول على الكفر (predisposed towards *kufir*), were to continue living, then, due to the intense love which his parents had for him – and we know that حُبُّكَ الشَّيْءَ يُعَمِّي وَيُصَمِّ (love for something makes you blind and deaf) – the strong effect of *kufir* [which the boy had] could have influenced his parents, even though they were naturally predisposed (*jibillat*) towards Islam. Allāh ﷻ therefore protected these righteous parents and also rescued the youngster from punishment, because a person is only taken to task for the *kufir* which he is inclined to, when it starts to manifest itself [in this case, when he would have grown up]. If it does not become manifest, the person will not be taken to task.

People domesticate and tend to a baby snake although it is predisposed towards biting. They will tend to it, show love to it and will not be angered by its *jibillat* (natural predisposition). However, once it grows big and bites someone, the person will become angry at it and trample it to death.

If people were to be taken to task for their *jibillat* (naturally predisposed) *kufir*, the punishment would have been meted out to them in the *'ālam al-arwāh* itself and the children of the polytheists

would also have been punished.
Allāh ﷻ would not have said:

وَمَا كُنَّا مَعْلُومِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا

"We do not punish until We commission a Messenger."

I have run out of paper and I think I answered your question. There is no need to go into too many details. If you consider this answer to be correct, let me know. If either you or your students still have any doubts, there is no harm in asking me again. That is all. Was salām.

Conclusion: The creation has three conditions (1) طبع – natural predisposition, innate nature, (2) فطرة – the affirmation of *tauhīd* which continues until birth. In fact, it remains until the child reaches the age of intelligence and understanding. (3) ملة – religion which he follows according to his choice. It commences with the arrival of intelligence and is taken into consideration after he reaches puberty. Reward and punishment is based upon the third condition. A person is not questioned about the first two conditions. The second condition was attached to the first. After reaching puberty, the innate nature of the person manifests itself at some time or the other and, either repulses the other condition, or affirms it. That is all.

Another thought came to my mind after I completed writing this letter. I consider it appropriate to write it as well. The basis for your objection and consideration of both Ahādīth to be conflicting is that you regarded طبع and فطرة to mean one and the same thing, whereas they refer to two different aspects. This will be clear to you from my explanation. Now my lengthy explanation has also become irrelevant. Had I first explained it like this and said that طبع has a certain meaning and فطرة means something else, the

discussion would not have been necessary. Be that as it may, there is nothing to fret about. That is all.

Question 5

The *Mishkāt* (Ahmadī edition, p. 11) states:

إن الشيطان قد آيس أن يعبد المصلون في جزيرة العرب الخ

"Shaytān has given up hope of muṣallīs (those who are regular with their ṣalāh) worshipping Him in the Arabian Peninsular."

This Hadīth makes reference to the absence of *shirk* in Arabia. Shaytān's despair of man committing *shirk* is almost impossible, because he is fully aware of man's original disposition (*jibillat*).

Despite this, the above Hadīth is supported by another Hadīth on page 447:

قال قلت يا رسول الله أتشرك أمّتك من بعدك قال نعم أما إنهم لا يعبدون شمسا ولا قمرا ولا حجرا ولا وثنا الخ. صفحة ٥٣٨ : وإني لست أخشى عليكم أن تشركوا بعدي

A Sahābī narrates: I asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Will your ummah commit *shirk* after you?" He replied: "Yes. However, they will not worship the sun, the moon, any rock or any idol..."

Then on page 538, Rasūlullāh says: "I do not fear your committing *shirk* after me..."

The above narrations clearly indicate the absence of *shirk*. Therefore, the following Hadīth on page 473 seems to contradict the previous Ahādīth:

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تضطرب إليّات نساء دوس حول ذي الخلفة،
الحديث

"The Final Hour will not occur until the buttocks of the women of the Daus tribe move around Dhū al-Khiṣlah."

Answer:

When Shayṭān observed Islam's strength and the Muslims' fortitude, he despaired of the Muslims ever committing *shirk*. Rasūlullāh ﷺ affirmed this in the most eloquent manner by saying that īmān and Islam had been firmly established – on the highest level and to such an extent that Shayṭān, who had many long-standing hopes [of misleading them], had also lost hope and despaired. However, of whom did he lose hope? He lost hope of the *muṣallīs* – that is, the Muslims – and not of the disbelievers. Look at the words of the most eloquent of all people [Rasūlullāh ﷺ]! He refers to Shayṭān's despair of misleading the Muslims and not to his despair of the existence of *shirk*, thus maintaining the existence of the disbelievers who actually ensure the continued hopes of Shayṭān.

First of all it is obvious that 'despair' does not necessarily mean non-existence. Everyone despairs of good health when they are close to death, yet they regain their good health. Why should Shayṭān's despair then necessitate the non-existence of *shirk*? When he saw Islam and the Muslims in their full strength, he lost hope and despaired. However, such strength does not continue [forever]. It gradually wanes to the extent where one only hears the *kalimah* from one's forefathers and no one knows what it means – as has been mentioned in a Ḥadīth. Thus, if *shirk* makes its appearance at such a time, what contradiction is there [between this and the above-quoted Aḥādīth]?

If, according to you, Shayṭān is aware of their original disposition (*jibillat*), then he should also be aware of their original *fiṭrah* – which is Islam. Assuming man's *jibillat* was *shirk* ... Rasūlullāh ﷺ personally expressed the strength of the īmān of the Arabs in the most eloquent manner. Thus, the *ghayr jibillī* (those inclinations

which they were not predisposed to) also became *jibillī* (part of their innate nature).

We now come to your doubt regarding the Hadīth "*Will your ummah commit shirk after you?...*" The word *ummah* has two meanings:

(1) Sometimes it refers to *ummat-e-da'wat*, which would include the Jews and all the disbelievers. This meaning can never be applied to the present Hadīth because polytheists – *ummat-e-da'wat* – were present while Rasūlullāh ﷺ was alive and so there would have been no reason to ask such a question.

(2) The other meaning of *ummah* is *ummat-e-ijābat*. It refers to Muslims and includes righteous Muslims as well as sinners. Disbelievers are not included within the scope of this meaning.

The second meaning was thus intended in the Hadīth in question. When the questioner observed Islam's strength and clear proofs, he asked: "Will this situation remain even after you, or will your *ummat-e-ijābat* commit the *shirk* which the Jews and the Christians are guilty of?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ then replied that there will be no *shirk-e-jalīy* (obvious, unconcealed polytheism) but *shirk-e-khafīy* (subtle, hidden polytheism) will creep into their midst.

If a person becomes a *murtad* (an apostate), he would no longer fall into the category of *ummat-e-ijābat*. Thus, any doubt in this regard will also be removed. When the wind (*rīḥ*) will blow [one of the major signs of the Resurrection] and cause all Muslims to die, it will be followed by idol-worship in Arabia. Such people are also not *ummat-e-ijābat* but *ummat-e-da'wat* and therefore do not fall within the scope of this question. Yes, one doubt remains about the *ahl al-hawā'* (those who follow their vain desires). You may consider them *kāfir* as per the definition of the *Muhaddithūn* (Hadīth scholars) or *fāsiq* as per the definition of the *Mutakallimūn* (theologians). This doubt is therefore also removed. I have already explained the nature of the *shirk* of the *ummah* in the light of the

above-quoted Hadīth.

As for the Hadīth: “*I do not fear your committing shirk after me...*” ... in this Hadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ directly addresses the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم. Study the context of this Hadīth. It does not refer to the Muslims who will be present close to the time of the Resurrection. Therefore, there can also be no objection here. That is all.

Question 6

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

حتى يقاد للشاة الجلحاء من الشاة القرناء

“[There will be Absolute Justice on the Day of Resurrection] to the extent of revenge being exacted from a horned goat in favour of a hornless goat.”

If animals are not *mukallaḥ* (accountable), what is the reason for this mutual exacting of revenge? Countless animals prey on each other, and the flesh of certain animals are *halāl* to man. Will recompense for all of this have to be given?

Answer:

The *qisās* (retribution) among animals will not occur on the basis of accountability, but on the basis of equality. Those who are accountable [humans] will be punished through the Hell-fire. Retribution will be taken among the animals and they will be reduced to non-existence. This retribution will apply in cases where the Order [of Allāh ﷻ] was disobeyed. If we eat what we are permitted to eat, it will be considered absolute justice and obedience to orders. No wrong or oppression would have been committed and therefore there would be no question of retribution. As for the animal which was created to be the food of another animal ... this was done in obedience to the Order [of Allāh ﷻ]. The retribution which is mentioned in the above Hadīth refers to the

following situations: For example, when one ox unnecessarily stabs another ox with its horns, or, when two animals fight against each other while one has horns and the other does not and the hornless animal suffers more injuries. Nevertheless, this mutual exacting of revenge and retribution will not take place on the basis of accountability. The punishment for those who are accountable is the Hell-fire and so forth – which have been clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 7

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

فأخرج من كان في قلبه أدنى أدنى مثقال حبة خردلة من إيمان فأخرجه من النار

"(With regard to the intercession of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Allāh ﷻ will address him saying: 'O Muḥammad), remove the person who has the slightest īmān – even if it is equal to a mustard seed.' I will then remove him from the Hell-fire."

This means that the person who has the slightest bit of īmān will be removed from the Hell-fire through the intercession of Hadrat Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The Hadīth continues thereafter:

فأقول إنذن لي فيمن قال لا إله إلا الله فأخرجن منها من قال لا إله إلا الله

"I will say: 'Permit me to also to remove the person who said Lā ilāha illallāh.' And so, I will remove from the Hell-fire the one who has said Lā ilāha illallāh."

If this refers to a believer, he would have already been removed on the basis of the previous Hadīth which states that the one with the slightest bit of īmān will be removed. What then is the meaning of the words ليس لك ذلك (this is not for you to do)?

If it refers to a *kāfir* (disbeliever) or *munāfiq* (a hypocrite, who has merely uttered the *kalimah* without believing it in his heart) – and it appears to refer to such a person – what would the meaning of *فأخرج منها* (I will remove from the Hell-fire...) be, because there is no *īmān* which can be less than a mustard seed [in the heart of such a person]? The disbelievers and hypocrites are neither included in the intercession, nor are they eligible to be removed from the Hell-fire.

Answer:

The person who utters the *kalimah* and has the slightest affirmation of the meaning of the *kalimah* in his heart is [considered to be] a believer. *īmān* cannot be divided into parts (*tajazzī*). Yes, it can increase, decrease, intensify and so forth. Therefore, such a person can be removed from the Hell-fire through the intercession of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The lowest level of *īmān* is to utter the *kalimah* verbally – even if such a person has no understanding whatsoever of it in his heart, yet at the same time he does not refute (*takdhīb*) it. Instead, his heart is totally devoid of both affirmation (*tasdīq*) and refutation (*takdhīb*).

Furthermore, affirmation and refutation cannot be present collectively, but they can be absent collectively. Therefore such people [those who do not understand it, but does not refute it] will eventually be removed from the Hell-fire. You may be surprised by this explanation, but I will prove it to you from the Hadīth. Although it is difficult to understand, if you ask the '*ulamā*' to explain it to you, you will begin to appreciate it. There is a Hadīth narrated by Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه in *Ibn Mājah*, p. 303:

أبواب الفتن، باب ذهاب القرآن والعلم

Refer to this Hadīth and my explanation will dawn upon you. That is all.

Question 8

Page 484:

ولا يتكلم يومئذ إلا الرسل وكلام الرسل يومئذ اللهم سلم سلم

"None but the Messengers will speak on the Day of Resurrection. The speech of the Messengers on that Day will be: 'O Allāh! Save us, save us.'"

The following is mentioned on page 486:

شعار المؤمنين يوم القيامة على الصراط رب سلم سلم

"The distinguishing call of the believers on the Day of Resurrection, when they are on the Sirāt will be: 'O Lord! Save us, save us.'"

These two narrations appear to be contradictory.

Answer:

Where reference is made to the speaking of none but the Messengers, it refers to the occurrence at the time of *nafsī nafsī* – when each person will be so utterly engrossed in his own self [his own condition] that he will become totally oblivious of others. The Messengers will be excluded from this [condition]. They will be making *du'ā'* for their *ummats* while at peace with themselves.

The speech of the believers will be specifically limited to their own selves. While crossing the Sirāt, they will be worried about their own condition and will repeatedly make *du'ā'* for themselves saying: *"Save us, save us."* In short, this 'speaking' does not have the same meaning [in both verses]. It differs in the two verses. This is clear. That is all.

If you have any doubt or misgiving, please inform me even though

a person like me cannot provide answers to an intelligent person like you. However, because of your *husn zann* (good thoughts) about me, I take the courage to answer your questions. All your questions are very challenging and I cannot answer every one of them. They will become clear [to you] after you pose them. All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the universe.

Question 9

[This is a continuation to question 5].

If the words "*Will your ummah commit shirk after you? ...*" refers to the *ummat-e-ijābat*, then the essence of this question will be: Will the *ummat-e-ijābat* become *murtad* (apostates) by committing *shirk*? Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied that apostasy through *shirk* will not occur. In such a case – if the Daus women's worship of Dhū al-Khilṣah takes place after they have embraced Islam – it would negate apostasy through *shirk* and it would also contradict the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ: لَا يَعْبُدُونَ حَجْرًا وَلَا وُثْنًا (they will neither worship a rock nor an idol).

I do not understand your statement: "If a person becomes a *murtad* (apostate), he would be out of the category of *ummat-e-ijābat*" because the contradiction still seems to remain. If we were to accept that this refers to an incident which will take place after the era of Islam and the blowing of the wind, I will have no misgiving and objection. However, there has to be some evidence for this.

Answer:

The words "*Will your ummah commit shirk...*" are confined to the *ummat-e-ijābat*. The issue therefore has an inherent precondition as long as this quality [*ummat-e-ijābat*] remains. A negation of what is meant is necessary – not a removal of this quality. The combination of *īmān* and *shirk* in this context is similar to the verse:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

"Many people do not believe in Allāh except that they ascribe partners [to Him] as well."

Consider the Jews and the Christians. Despite their claims of belief in their Books and in prophethood, they were still polytheists. Therefore, the general rule of خروج عن الأمة (coming out of the ummah) through apostasy still applies. It seems that you did not ponder over this. Yes, if it can be established that the shirk of the Daus women occurred after the blowing of the wind, the doubt and misgiving will be removed. Thus I certainly found a proof to remove my friend's [referring to Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī rahimahullāh] doubt and misgiving, although there was no real need for it.

قال مسلم في صفحة ٣٩٠

من الأحمدى: عن عائشة قالت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول لا يذهب الليل والنهار حتى تعبد اللات والعزى إلى أن قال: ثم يبعث الله ريحا طيبة فتوفى كل من في قلبه مثقال حبة من خردل من الإيمان فيبقى من لا خير فيه فيرجعون إلى دين آبائهم، الحديث. فارتفع الإشكال والحمد لله تعالى.

Imām Muslim narrates on page 390 of the Ahmadī edition:

On the authority of 'Ā'ishah radiyallāhu 'anhā who said:

"I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: 'The night and day will not come to an end (Resurrection will not take place) until Lāt and al-'Uzzā [names of two idols] are worshipped...' until he said: 'Allāh ﷻ will then send forth a pleasant wind which will cause the death of every person in whose heart there is even a mustard seed's worth of imān. At such a time, there will remain only those who have no good whatsoever in them and they will return to the religion of their forefathers.'"

The objection is now removed. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ.

Question 10

Page 20, line 10 states حديث حسن (it is a sound Hadīth). The word حسن in this context is different from the technical meaning of the word, because تعدد طرق (a Hadīth which is narrated through several chains) is a prerequisite for a Hadīth to be classified حسن. The present narration is narrated by 'Abd ar-Rahmān alone. On what basis is it considered حسن?

Answer:

The technical meaning of a حسن narration is: The narrator of such a Hadīth is below the narrator of a sahīh Hadīth with regard to his power of retention (dabt), but he is not rejected. تعدد طرق is not a prerequisite for this. This definition applies to a Hadīth which is حسن لذاته (sound due to its intrinsic nature). The prerequisite of تعدد طرق applies to a Hadīth which is حسن لغيره (sound on the basis of external factors). Such a Hadīth was originally considered as weak, but gained strength through other chains of transmission and became حسن لغيره.

The definition of تعدد طرق for the حسن Hadīth which you took from *Tirmidhī*, *Bāb al-'Ilal* applies to حسن لغيره and not حسن لذاته. The first page of *Tirmidhī* makes mention of this at the point where he explains the combination of sahīh, hasan, gharīb. That is all.



Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was the imām, crown and authority to which the 'ulamā' of India constantly referred. Allāh ﷻ therefore bestowed him with unparalleled juristic acumen. The complex issues which they [the 'ulamā'] could not solve and which could not be unravelled by the intellects among intellectuals and the jurists of the era, would eventually be presented to him after they had spent many hours discussing these issues, pondering over them

and investigating them. Hadrat would provide answers in an absolute casual way, leaving the questioner astounded.

Imām Rabbānī's presence was a source of mercy to the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ and a means towards their reformation. Consequently, Hadrat rectified the evils in which the masses had become engrossed and which even the learned could not identify as evils. He would speak about these evils repeatedly and emphasize upon his audience to convey whatever he had said to others and to practise upon it themselves. It is possible that the person who hears it is more intelligent than the person who conveyed it to him.

There were those who heard the issues which he discussed for the first time in their lives. Unfortunately there were also those who had ulterior motives. They would incite the masses against his teachings because they had made themselves guilty of committing these evils which he was warning against and they wanted the masses to blame the *maulwīs* who tried to rectify them. There were those [amongst the '*ulamā*'] who had become proud and haughty because of the wealth of knowledge they had received. They wrongfully considered an unlawful act to be lawful or vice versa and had spent a long time with the honourable title of '*maulwī*'. They acted on all the wrong things which they had taught and thereby became the leaders and guides of the [misguided] people.

Obviously they would hesitate at having to accept something which would taint their academic standing and expose them to their followers. They did not want their followers to think that their *maulwī Sāhib* did not know a *mas'alah*, or that he knew it, but did not teach it to them correctly. Therefore, instead of expressing their gratitude upon being corrected, they became Hadrat's bitter rivals. Those who were fanatical, proud, conceited, antagonistic and obstinate would look for an opportunity to display their audacity and disrespect through verbal assaults and vulgar language – to the extent of even losing their *īmān*.

Without a doubt, no sooner did Imām Rabbānī explain a *mas'alah*, than he would receive the reward of reviving an abandoned Sunnah. In addition to this, due to the insults which he had to endure from the people and the unique patience and fortitude which he displayed in return, it most certainly resulted in his progress in rank in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ. No one can gauge the extent of his progress in this regard. However, his devoted associates were greatly disturbed by these attacks and insults and this often resulted in verbal and written discussions and debates.

I consider it appropriate to quote thirty-five issues related to this subject so that the academic standing and juristic rank which Allāh ﷻ had bestowed upon Imām Rabbānī as an authority for the '*ulamā*', may be displayed. Allāh had bestowed him with the lofty capability of removing the doubts of academics regarding issues of jurisprudence. This quality, together with his ability of passing a correct and true verdict on disputed issues will be displayed in the forthcoming detailed answers which he supplied. It is because of replies such as these that servants like me refer to him with epithets such as Qutb al-'Ālam (lighthouse for the world), Marja' al-'Ulamā' (the authority to whom the '*ulamā*' constantly refer), Sultān al-'Ārifīn (the leader of those who truly recognized Allāh ﷻ), Mujaddid-e-Zamān (the reviver of the era) and Wahīd-e-'Asr (the unique personality of our times).

JURISTICAL DOUBTS AND DISPUTED ISSUES

Question 1

Are the monetary donations which a *madrasah* receives classified as *waqf* or *mamlūk*?

If they are classified as *waqf*, it will be *wājib* to retain the essential donation and impermissible to spend it in a manner which would result in its destruction. If it is classified as *mamlūk* and the principal is merely a representative (*wakīl*), then – if the donor should pass away – the donation is the right of his heirs and the

poor. It will become *wājib* upon the representative to search for them:

The same doubt can be raised against the Bayt al-Māl during the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Khulafā'.

I pondered a lot over this issue but could not find a solution amongst the principles of the Sharī'ah. Furthermore, if we were to mix different donations, it ought to be considered *istihlāk* (seeking to destroy something). When *mustahlak* wealth is spent as *mustahlak*, it will have to be voluntarily paid and the representative [principal] will have to give a guarantee to the owners. In such a situation, it will be extremely difficult for the *madrasah* authorities or the trustees. I hope that my mind would be set at ease by your correct answer.

Answer:

The principal of a *madrasah* is the *qayyim* (custodian) and *nā'ib* (deputy) of all the students, just as an *amīr* is a *nā'ib* of all his subjects. If anyone gives anything to the principal, his taking possession of it actually entails the students taking possession of it. When he takes possession of it, ownership of the item leaves the donor and it becomes the possession of the students. Although the amount and specifics of the item are unknown to them [the students], the *nā'ib* [principal in this case] is *mu'ayyan* (a specific person whose identity is known). When the donor passes away, his heirs cannot lay any claim to it [since ownership has left the donor when he made the donation]. The principal can also be a *wakīl* of the donor in certain instances. Nevertheless, such a donation is neither *waqf*, nor does it remain in the ownership of the donor and ownership of it cannot be claimed by the heirs of the donor.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 2

Many people convert a woman to Islam and marry her immediately thereafter, while Islam is not presented to the husband. Obviously,

this *nikāh* is not valid. If he refuses to embrace Islam even after presenting it to him, it is necessary to separate them through a judge. This does not happen here. However, if it is a Dār al-Harb, she will be automatically separated from him upon the expiry of three menstrual cycles.

Answer:

It is not permissible to marry a woman immediately upon converting her to Islam if she is already married, as is stated by you. Allah ﷻ knows best.

Question 3

In the case of religious matters, the witness or testimony of a Muslim is accepted, but not that of an disbeliever. In the case of transactions, the witness or testimony of both [Muslim and disbeliever] is accepted. Why, then, is a distinction being made between a Muslim who is classified *'ādil* (just or equitable) and one who is classified as *fāsiq* (a flagrant sinner) in the sense that *taharrī* (investigation or inquiry) and the greater opinion is considered in the case of a *fāsiq* but not in the case of an *'ādil*? The *Durr-e-Mukhtār* states:

جارية لزيد قال بكر وكلني زيد ببيعها حل لعمر شراؤها ووطنها، الخ

“Zayd owns a female slave. Bakr says that Zayd had appointed him as an agent to sell her. [In this case] it would be permissible for ‘Umar to buy her and to have intercourse with her (after buying her).”

In this regard the author states that the major opinion must be acted upon. We learn from the general context of the text that, whether the informer is *'ādil* or *fāsiq* (it is necessary to apply *taharrī* and the greater opinion for both). Whereas *taharrī* is not a prerequisite for one who is classified as *'ādil*.

Answer:

The need for *taharrī* in the case of a *jāriyah* (slave woman) applies when the informer is a *fāsiq*. This restriction is mentioned in *Hidāyah*. Such a condition does not apply to an *'ādil*. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 4

Can the washing of the hands prior to eating be established from any Hadīth or juristic statement?

Answer:

Tirmidhī has a chapter titled باب الوضوء قبل الطعام وبعده (the chapter on *wudū'* [washing hands] before and after eating). This chapter contains a Hadīth in which the following is stated:

فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بركة الطعام الوضوء قبله وبعده، الخ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "The blessing of food lies in *wudū'* [washing the hands] before and after eating..."

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 5

A person performs *ṣalāh* and fasts but does not pay *zakāh*. He intermingles with polytheists and attends their weddings and funerals. Are his *ṣalāhs* and fasts accepted? Is he within the fold of Islam?

Answer:

If a person performs *ṣalāh*, does not pay *zakāh* and attends the weddings and funerals of polytheists, his *ṣalāh* is accepted. He is classified a *fāsiq* for not paying *zakāh* and committing other impermissible acts. Allāh ﷻ says:

إن الله لا يظلم مثقال ذرة، الآية

*"Allāh does not hold back the right of anyone [even if
it may be] equal to an atom's weight."
(Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 40) .*

That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 6

A few people pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of a pious 'ālim and after some time he passed away. Can these *murīds* pledge *bay'ah* to someone else? Is the renewal of *bay'ah* permissible according to the Sharī'ah?

Answer:

It is permissible to renew every type of *bay'ah*. (1) If it was a *bay'ah* of *taubah* and a person commits a sin, it is necessary for him to make *taubah* again – irrespective of whether it is at the hands of the first *buzurg* (pious elder) or at the hands of another *buzurg*. (2) If it was a *bay'ah* to enter a *silsilah* (spiritual chain), the practice of entering into several *silsilahs* has been in vogue in the past and is still at present. (3) If the *bay'ah* was to acquire a *nisbat* (affinity with a person) and the person passes away, a person may, most certainly, acquire *nisbat* from someone else. This is because it has always been the Norm of Allāh ﷻ (*Sunnatullāh*) that people should derive benefit from those who are alive and not from the dead, although this too is occasionally possible. Renewal of *bay'ah* was practised by the pious elders of every [spiritual] family. It is not an unknown practice.

There are no grounds for the prohibition on repeating and renewing a *bay'ah* or for making a promise of *taubah*, to show love for a people (or person), or for the sake of studying under someone. After the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the *Ṣaḥābah* ﷺ pledged *bay'ah* to the four *khulafā'* in the sequence in which they followed. With the death of one teacher, the system of studying under another teacher continued. The renewal of *bay'ah* is not against any order of the

Sharī'ah and *Tarīqah*. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 7

Is it permissible for the Shī'ah and Ahl as-Sunnah to intermarry?

Answer:

Marriage with the Shī'ah is most certainly not permissible according to those who consider the Shī'ah to be apostates. This is the *fatwā* of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz *rahimahullāh*. Those who consider the Shī'ah to be like the Ahl al-Kitāb [Jews and Christians] say that a Shī'ah woman may marry a Sunnī man, but a Sunnī woman may not marry a Shī'ah man. Some '*ulamā*' consider the Shī'ah to be *fāsiqs*. Marriage in such a case will be valid, but it is not good because it would inevitably lead to the corruption of one's *Dīn*. My personal view is that the Shī'ah should be treated as Ahl al-Kitāb. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 8

What is the amount for *sadaqatul fitr* according to the prevailing weights in India? From the statements of the jurists, we learn the following:

۱ صاع = ۴ من
۱ من = ۲ رطل
۱ رطل = ۲۰ استار
۱ استار = ۶ درهم
۱ درهم = ۱۴ قیراط
۱ قیراط = ۵ جَر

Based on the above, one *sā'* = 1040 dirhams. The popular weight of a dirham is 0.3 *māsha*, but according to the above calculation it is less. That is, a dirham is 70 *jauw* and a *rattī* is 4 *jauw*. Thus, a dirham will be 2.1 *māsha*. There is a big difference between this and the popular weight. Based upon this, the popular *niṣāb* of zakāh

– 52 *taulah* of silver – will also be less.

I hope you will satisfy me with a detailed answer. If the calculation is based on *taulahs*, will we be able to ascertain our local weights?

Answer:

Remove whatever excess there is in 70 *jauw*, make the dirham from it and calculate it accordingly. You stated that a *rattī* is equal to 4 *jauw*. This is incorrect, it is equal to 3 *jauw*.

Question 9

Zayd claims that many issues in the *Dīn* were left incomplete by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When the '*ulamā*' delved into these issues later on, the *Dīn* was completed. Bakr rejects this outright and says that it is impossible for Rasūlullāh ﷺ to have left something of the *Dīn* which was completed later on and thereby lay the responsibility of a defective *Dīn* on Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Such a person is a *kāfir* because Allāh ﷻ says:

اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً

"Today I perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour on you, and have chosen Islam as a religion for you."

Between Zayd and Bakr, whose view is correct?

Answer:

The *Dīn* was completed and perfected with Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the sense that all-embracing texts were revealed in such a manner that all the subsidiary matters which would be experienced right until the Resurrection can be solved in the light of these texts – even though clear rulings on the subsidiary matters are not found in these texts. In this sense, the *Dīn* is thus complete.

As for deriving and extracting subsidiary issues which are not

clearly stated in the texts ... this was done by the *mujtahidīn* and 'ulamā'. If this is what Zayd meant, but did not express himself correctly, then his belief and statement is correct. If this is not what he meant, he has uttered a statement of *kufī* because he made a statement which is in contradiction to absolute texts.
Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 10

Zayd's parents are very enthusiastic and devoted to holding functions of 'urs, *maulūd sharīf*, *gyār wī sharīf* etc. They claim that a person who rejects a *maulūd sharīf* function is a Wahhābī and out of the fold of Islam. Since Zayd has become a 'Wahhābī' [according to his parents] because he does not hold the same beliefs as they do, remains aloof from such functions, considers them to be sinful, and never participates in these functions, his parents are most displeased with him and remain aloof from him. They say: "As long as he does not repent, hold a *maulūd* function and personally participate in it, we will never be pleased with him, we will never look at him and we will never speak to him." Subsequently, they took an oath in this regard. Zayd says: "These acts are *bid'ah* and sinful. That is why I can never commit them. A son is not liable to obey his parents in sinful acts."

According to the Sharī'ah, who is correct – Zayd or his parents? Is it not *wājib* on Zayd to please his parents by participating in these customary functions? Does his causing the displeasure and anger of his parents not make him eligible for the displeasure of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ?

Answer:

Zayd is correct in his statements and beliefs. These functions are held in a dogmatic manner in some areas and contain many evils. They are most certainly not devoid of sin. It is not permissible to participate in them. It is not necessary to obey one's parents in matters which entail sin. In fact, it is not permissible to obey them

in such matters.

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

*"Obedience to the creation is not lawful
if it entails disobedience to the Creator."*

However, if Zayd's father merely wants Zayd to participate in a function where no evils are committed, in which there is no one whose company he is prohibited from being in [e.g. strange women] and in the function they speak about Rasūlullāh's ﷺ birth, or his battles, habits, character and Sunnah – then this is actually an act of worship. In such a case it is not appropriate for Zayd to refuse to attend without any valid Shar'ī reason.

It is most certainly impermissible for Zayd's parents to obligate him to attend functions in which evils and sins are committed, or for him to host such a function. The actual remembrance [of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ birth] is not a sin in itself, provided there is not even a hint of any other sin in it. Even if Zayd refuses to go to functions in which no evils are committed, he cannot be reprimanded, because remembrance is *mandūb* (desirable) and it is not appropriate to reprimand and criticize someone for leaving out a *mandūb* act.

As for believing that the person who rejects *maulūd* etc. is a *kāfir* ... this is most certainly not permissible. A person who holds such a belief is committing a grave error.

Question 11

Zayd invited 'Umar to break his fast with him so that he [Zayd] could obtain the reward of feeding a fasting person. 'Umar – due to his ignorance and incorrect beliefs – broke his fast with a grain of salt or some other food item so that he would not lose out on the reward for fasting. Thereafter, he ate the foods which were offered

to him by Zayd. Will Zayd receive the reward of feeding a fasting person, as is mentioned in the Hadīth?

Answer:

The person who feeds a fasting person shall receive the full reward for his action even if the fasting person broke his fast with some of his own food. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 12

What is the ruling with regard to smoking a huqqah? Is it halāl, harām, makrūh tahrīmī or makrūh tanzīhī?

Doctors unanimously agree that there is no benefit whatsoever in it and that it is nothing but a frivolous activity of play and amusement. If this is correct, will smoking a huqqah not be classified as unnecessary isrāf (wastage) and lahw wa la'ib (play and amusement)? If it is classified as such, what is the Shar'ī ruling with regard to its permissibility and impermissibility?

Maulānā Shāh Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib rahimahullāh writes in Masā'il Arba'in:

ودلت المسئلة على ان الملاهي كلها حرام

"The present mas'alah shows that all items of play and amusement are harām."

Was the practice of smoking a huqqah prevalent during the first three eras of Islam? If it came into vogue after the first three eras, will smoking huqqah be classified as a bid'ah sayyi'ah (evil innovation)? The discomfort which a person experiences from the stench of huqqah smoke and from the stench which emanates from a person who smokes it is obvious. Consequently, based upon this proof, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib rahimahullāh writes that it is makrūh tahrīmī.

Answer:

Many *fatāwā* and articles have been written about the *huqqah* and many investigations and discussions have been conducted regarding this issue. However, I feel that the preferred opinion is that it is *makrūh tanzīhī*. At present, it is used as a treatment for phlegm. If the bad odour can be removed, it will be *mubāh* (permissible) without *karāhat* (detestability). The rest of what you wrote are *takallufāt* (unnecessary formalities). Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 13

In the area where I live, no wedding is complete without singing and dancing. In practice, people have raised it to a status which is far beyond *fard* and *wājib*. If I were to ponder, I cannot think of a single Muslim out of a thousand Muslims who ever misses his *salāh* and fasting. Yet, no one ever has a wedding without singing and dancing. If any person does not have singing and dancing at his wedding – either out of fear of Allāh ﷻ, or due to his poverty and weak financial position, no one will attend. Even if one or two people attend, they will do so with intense dislike. Singing and dancing are undoubtedly absolutely *harām*. When a minor sin is persistently committed, it becomes a major sin and persisting in a major sin conveys a person towards *kufir*. What, then, would we say about these people?

Answer:

Such people are classified as *fāsiqs*. As long as we are able to rationalize and find some leeway [of permissibility] in the actions and statements of a Muslim, it is not permissible for us to label him as a *kāfir*. They are *fāsiqs* on the basis of their committing these acts, but do not label anyone a *kāfir*.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 14

The ponds and lakes have become completely dry, so the washermen (*dhobīs*) dug wells in these ponds. They draw water from these

wells and fill large clay pans with this water. All types of clothes – *najis* and *tāhir* (impure and pure) – are washed together. The water from these pans flow back into the wells and this well-water is again filled into these pans. The washer-men do not know the method of purifying clothes. Even if we had to show them how to purify it, they would not wash it in such a way. In addition to this, all the clothes are left to soak overnight with goat droppings [probably used as a detergent]. They do not wash the clothes without doing this. What is the ruling with regard to the purity or impurity of such clothes? Is it permissible to wear it without first purifying it at home? Is *ṣalāh* with such clothes valid?

Answer:

It is not known with certainty that your clothes were certainly mixed with *najis* clothes, or that the water with which your clothes were washed, was definitely *najis*. Your clothes are therefore *tāhir* and the same applies to every other person's clothes which were washed in the manner described above. This is because the essential status of a thing is that of *tahārat* (purity) and water is essentially a purifier. Its impurity will be established if it is known with absolute certainty that *najāsah* had fallen into the water and that it had not been removed from it. This matter is thus in doubt and something can neither become *najis* on the basis of a doubt, nor can anything be proven.

The clothes which are washed by the washer-man and then brought to you are *tāhir*. There is no mark of *najāsah* on them. You do not know for certain that your clothes were washed with impure water. The principle *واليقين لا يزول بالشك* (certainty cannot be removed through a doubt) applies. Furthermore, according to the Mālikī *madh-hab*, water can never become impure as long as a quality of impurity does not appear on the water. There is no quality of impurity visible on your clothes. Thus, the water is considered to be pure and so are the clothes according to the Mālikī *madh-hab*. In such situations of necessity, it is unanimously agreed upon that it is

permissible to adopt the *madh-hab* of the other imāms.
Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 15

All the *muṣallīs* have unanimously agreed to engage in the *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh* in a loud voice in the Musjid. They unanimously agreed to do this during the month of Ramadān, after the four *rak'ats*, after some *tasbīh*, *du'ā'* and the *tarāwīh ṣalāh*. They want to do this with the intention of experiencing a sense of well-being, splendour and power of Islam. Is it permissible to do this?

Answer:

To engage in *dhikr* in this manner after assembling for the *tarāwīh ṣalāh*, has not been reported by the *Sahābah* ﷺ and the *Tābi'īn*. This particular form is therefore a *bid'ah*.

كما قال في الوقعات قراءة الفاتحة بعد المكتوبة لأجل المهمات وغيرها
مكروهة لأنها بدعة لم ينقل عن الصحابة والتابعين. انتهى

As stated in *al-Wāqi'āt*:

"It is *makrūh* to read *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* after the *fard ṣalāh* for the sake of attaching importance to it and for other reasons. This is because it is a *bid'ah* and not reported from the *Sahābah* ﷺ and *Tābi'īn*."

Al-Bahr ar-Rā'iq states:

عن ابن مسعود رضي الله تعالى عنه أنه سمع قوما اجتمعوا في المسجد
يهللون ويصلون على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم جهرا فراح إليهم فقال ما
عهدنا ذلك في عهده صلى الله عليه وسلم وما أراكم إلا مبتدعين، الخ.

"Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ heard some people who had gathered in the Musjid and were saying *Lā ilāha illallāh* and sending salutation to

Rasūlullāh ﷺ in a loud voice. He went to them and said: 'We did not do this during the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. I consider you to be *bid'atīs*.'"

From the above two quotations we learn that, although *dhikr* is certainly permissible, it is a *bid'ah* to change its form and place if such a form is different from that which was prevalent during the first three eras of Islam. To say *kalimah tayyibah* in a loud voice is permissible – provided it is done under circumstances which are permissible. However, saying it in this way in a *tarāwīḥ* assembly is not established. If this form is not established, it will be a *bid'ah* to say it. Furthermore, the masses will consider it to be Sunnah. When the masses consider a *mubāḥ* (permissible) act to be Sunnah, it becomes a *bid'ah*.

قال في العالمكيرية ما يفعل عقيب الصلوة مكروه لأن الجهال يعتقدونه سنة أو واجبة وكل مباح يؤدي إليه فهو مكروه كذا في الزاهدي، انتهى.

It is stated in 'Ālamgīrīyyah:

"It is *makrūh* to do anything after the [*fard*] *ṣalāh* [if such a thing is more than what is Sunnah]. This is because the ignoramuses will begin to consider it to be Sunnah or *wājib*. Also, [the principle is that] any *mubāḥ* act which leads to this [believing it to be Sunnah or *wājib*] is *makrūh*. As stated in *az-Zāhidī*."

Nevertheless, it is *bid'ah* to engage in *dhikr* in this way. Although the actual *dhikr* of *kalimah tayyibah* in a loud voice is permissible, doing it in this way is not established from the first three eras of Islam. In fact, this [after the *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh*] is the occasion for *ikhfā* (silent, concealed *dhikr*). It is therefore a *bid'ah* and could also lead to the corruption of the beliefs of the masses. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 16

A bed is infested with bugs. Is it permissible to pour boiling water

on such a bed with a view to getting rid of the bugs? It is a known fact that, apart from Allāh ﷻ, it is not permissible for anyone to torment any living creature – whether human or animal – with fire and water? I have heard a *maulwī Sāhib* say that, because these bugs are harmful, there is nothing wrong with pouring boiling water to get rid of them.

Answer:

Killing bugs with boiling water is not prohibited and does not fall within the ambit of the prohibition on 'burning living creatures'. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 17

There is a certain custom which is prevalent in our area. When a person passes away, all the *salāhs*, *fasts* etc. which he had missed during his lifetime are estimated and the *fidyah* for all this is calculated. A person is then made to sit in front and he is told thus: "The deceased's *fidyah* has amounted to this much. We are giving you this Qur'ān in place of this amount." The person accepts the Qur'ān even if the amount of *fidyah* may have been fifty rupees while the value of the Qur'ān was five rupees. They all understand that the Qur'ān is a priceless item and whatever price is attached to it can never be enough.

This entire procedure is known as *mas'alah-e-isqāt*. Is this *hīlah* (legal stratagem) permissible according to the Sharī'ah? Can it be of any benefit to the deceased? If it is not permissible, what is the ruling with regard to the Qur'ān which the heirs of the deceased gave to the person? Has he become the owner of the Qur'ān which was given to him or is it necessary for him to return it? If the heirs of the deceased cannot pay his *fidyah* because of poverty, is there any other lawful way out?

Answer:

The first scenario is permissible at the time of need. At present, the

norm is that – even if the deceased does not have any missed ṣalāhs, fasts etc. – this custom is observed. Even in a case where he has left behind a lot of wealth in his estate and is liable to pay for his missed ṣalāhs, fasts etc., the heirs restrict themselves to the above custom. In this way, they are usurping the rights of the poor [by not paying these amounts] and resorting to ploys and stratagems to avoid fulfilling the Rights of Allāh ﷻ. This is essentially not permissible. Those who are guilty of this are sinners and in error. They are *bid'atīs* and thieves. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 18

What is the limit of *ta'ām al-mayyit* (food of the deceased)? Food is given to the poor as *isāl-e-thawāb* (for the sake of sending reward to the deceased).

Is it *makrūh* to eat this particular food, or is the food which is distributed among the family members and known as *saum* – not as *isāl-e-thawāb*, but as a mere custom – classified as *ta'ām al-mayyit*?

If this is also classified as *ta'ām al-mayyit*, what is the difference between this food and the food which is distributed during the *ṣātiḥah* (prayer) for the pious personalities (the food which is also known as *nayāz*)? After all – the food during the *ṣātiḥah* for the pious personalities is also not for the sake of *isāl-e-thawāb*. If it was for the sake of *isāl-e-thawāb*, they would not have eaten it themselves [but would have given it to the poor only]. Those who permit this consider it to be a good act (فعل مستحسن), observe the *ṣātiḥah* and eat it. *ṣātiḥah* is also observed over *saum* food. It is eaten by all and distributed among the family members. In fact, *ṣātiḥah* is also not observed and the food is merely distributed. Provide a clear answer with clear evidence.

Answer:

Ta'ām al-mayyit is the food which is prepared as *isāl-e-thawāb* for

the deceased. As for the food which is prepared for the family for the sake of show and ostentation ... it is classified as *ṭa'ām al-mutabārīyyīn* (food prepared by mutual boasters). The Hadīth prohibits accepting such invitations:

لَقَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ لَا تَقْبَلُوا طَعَامَ الْمُتَبَارِيينَ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

"Do not accept the food prepared by mutual boasters."

The food which is prepared for the *īṣāl-e-thawāb* of pious personalities is also *ṭa'ām al-mayyit* and the ruling for it is the same as for food which is generally prepared for *īṣāl-e-thawāb*. The essential reason is that food which is given in charity causes weakness of the heart, because charity removes sins. Therefore this food is similar to *mā' musta'mal* (water which has already been used to perform *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*) in which there is some sort of contamination. The Banū Hāshim [family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ] are prohibited from accepting charity because of their high rank and honour.

There is a severe contamination in *zakāh* as well. However, it is lawful upon those who are its lawful recipients. Although it may be polluted, it is accepted for the fulfilment of a need. A lawful recipient of *zakāh* may abstain from accepting *zakāh* even though it is permissible for him to receive it. He will not bring any sin upon himself if he should abstain from accepting it. However, even then, [if he abstains] it will not be devoid of pollution. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 19

The effect of medicine is based on experience and they are known to be effective. There are some medicines which are established through inspiration and revelation. They are effective at times and ineffective at other times. These medicines may also be effective

when prescribed by some people and not effective when prescribed by others. What is the reason for this when Shar'ī benefits are supposed to be for the *ummah* in general and the actual curer is Allāh ﷻ in all situations [no matter what medicine, when it is prescribed, by whom it is prescribed and to whom it is prescribed]?

Answer:

A sincere *du'ā'* is something which has an effect, but there are obstacles to it at times. No one knows about them and thus the medicine does not have any effect. For example: We all know that a sword cuts. However, sometimes a sword falls straight down and does not cut, or it has no effect on a soft body. The same applies to *du'ā's*. There are certain concealed obstacles which we do not know and it prevents the medicine from having an effect.

Question 20

Two *maulwīs* in our area differ on the issue of whether information regarding the sighting of the 'īd and Ramadān moon – which is obtained via telegraph – is worthy of consideration or not. I hope Hadrat would be able to inform me of Hadrat's investigation and honourable opinion as to the legal status of a telegraph message.

Answer:

A telegraph message is similar to a written letter containing symbols, code words and alphabets, just as you would get in the English language and other languages. Thus, just as we receive information via a letter, we receive it via a telegraph. The only difference is that a letter is made up of short sentences whereas a telegraph has one continuous message.

Just as it is necessary to have a reliable and unbiased writer when dictating a letter, the same will apply to a telegraph. Since the people who handle telegraph messages are *kuffār* and *fussāq* (plural of *fāsiq*), they are classified as unreliable in *Dīnī* matters. Thus, a telegraph ought to be regarded as unreliable unless there are

unbiased people handling it on both sides. The essential principle is that the statement of a *kāfir* is not reliable with regard to *Dīnī* matters. Based upon this, information received via telegraph is not reliable and it should not be relied upon for the commencement of *Ramādān* or for the sighting of the 'īd moon. However, after considering the present times in which most telegraph messages are authentic because the hearts are inclined to accept its authenticity – if a person should accept such information on the basis of *ghalabah-e-zann* (inclination to believe its authenticity) there exists the possibility of accepting it through the notification of one just [fair and impartial] person in the case of fasting, and two just persons in the case of ending the *Ramādān* fast. I therefore consider both parties to be correct. It has also become clear that a telegraph is a notification via writing. That is all. Was salām.

(In reply to the above letter, Maulwī Mumtāz 'Alī Sāhib wrote a letter to *Hadrat* in which he expressed some of his doubts and in which he aired his view that he considered *Hadrat* to be wrong. *Hadrat* wrote a reply to it and clarified the matter. *Hadrat* expressed his inclination and made reference to his thoughts in this regard. I feel it appropriate to quote this reply as well).

First of all, the jurists laid down the principle that the statement of a *kāfir* is totally unreliable. As for a *fāsiq* ... if his honesty can be established, his statement will be reliable. If not, it will be unreliable. The jurists write the same thing with regard to royal matters [or governmental matters]: If the ruler's order reaches his deputy via a reliable person, it is considered reliable. If not, it is considered to be unreliable. A letter written from one judge to another also falls under governmental matters and we know how meticulous they are regarding witnesses. Your restriction of this principle will therefore not be correct. Unless there is occasional evidence of an absence of honesty, it is not far-fetched to accept it, even if it is the statement of a *kāfir*. Thus, after investigating the matter and looking at the evidence, the statement of a *kāfir* on

religious matters is considered acceptable by you. However, the problem here is that, when it comes to the sighting of moon, the jurists do not even accept the statement of a *fāsiq*. Instead, they state that they have to be Muslims who are '*adūl*' (classified as just and unbiased). Thus, in such a case, if the means [the person who conveyed the message from a just Muslim] is a *fāsiq*, it will be futile. The just condition of the informer alone will only suffice if he personally says: **وإنه الخط يشبه الخط** (it certainly appears to be the correct message). The unreliability of the means [those who conveyed the message] renders the information unreliable.

Therefore, the original principle is non-acceptance. However, if there is evidence from several collective sources and one feels inclined towards accepting it, then it is another matter. This is probably why I wrote that "if the person accepts it on the basis of evidence, there appears to be permissibility according to some." That is all.

Question 21

Is trading in grain [with the intention of storing and hoarding it] absolutely *harām* or are there cases when it is permissible? What is the definition of prohibited *ihtikār*? Please explain clearly.

Answer:

It is permissible to purchase and store grain provided it is not going to cause harm to anyone. If a person makes an intention of selling it when the price is high, this intention will harm everyone. The person will be happy over the high price [which he is receiving] and displeased when the prices are low. If he does not have such an intention, trading in grain will be permissible. He may trade in grain as follows:

He may purchase a large quantity and start re-selling it at the prevailing market price. He must not wait for the prices to rise. If he does this, it will be classified as *ihtikār* (hoarding). In short, it is

sinful to have an evil intention when trading in grain. The trade itself is not unlawful. Trading in grain is considered undesirable because it is difficult for a person to save himself from temptation [to hoard and sell at a higher price at a later date].

Conclusion: Trading in grain is not prohibited but a wrong intention renders it prohibited. If a person does not cause any harm to people, the Shari'ah does not stop him from engaging in such trade. That is all.

Question 22

A person beat his wife, chased her out of his house, took back the jewellery and other items which belonged to him and said these words to her: "I am not keeping you, I have left you." The woman went to her parents' house and, six to eight months later, she received a divorce notice from her husband. One month after receiving this note, she got married to someone else. Did this marriage occur within her 'iddah? If it did, what should be done now?

Answer:

The divorce fell on the woman at the time when her husband said: "I have left you." The divorce note clearly clarifies that he intended divorce when he made the above-mentioned statement. This statement is one of *talāq-e-kināyah* (implicit divorce). The written divorce note establishes his intention of divorce. Her 'iddah commenced from the time he expelled her from his house. The second marriage is therefore valid – it took place after the expiry of the 'iddah. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 23

A person is classified a *ma'dhūr* (one who is excused) on the basis of سلس البول أو ريح (persistent urination or passing wind). What does this mean?

Answer:

This means that he cannot perform four *rak'ats* of *ṣalāh* without experiencing these excuses [urinating or passing wind]. If these excuses are not experienced to the extent of four *rak'ats*, the person can not be classified a *ma'dhūr*. He is considered to be a normal healthy person according to the *Sharī'ah*.

Question 24

Some people say that wearing red safflower-dyed clothes is permissible, while others say it is *ḥarām* to wear it. How is it for an *'ālim* who is in the public eye to wear red clothes?

Answer:

It is *ḥarām* for men to wear red, yellow and pink safflower-dyed clothes. As for red striped (or chequered), or partially red clothes ... this is permissible according to the majority of the *'ulamā'*, but it is preferable to abstain from wearing it. As for an *'ālim* ... if the clothes are dyed red, it is *ḥarām*, and the one who wears it is a sinner. If it is not dyed red, but it is striped or chequered, there is no harm in wearing it, because the majority of the *'ulamā'* have issued a *fatwā* of its permissibility. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 25

Which parts of a *ḥalāl* animal, such as a goat, ox, bird etc. are *ḥalāl* and which parts are *ḥarām*?

Answer:

We are prohibited from eating seven parts of a *ḥalāl* animal:

(1) The male private part, (2) the female private part, (3) the bladder, (4) the glands, (5) the *ḥarām* marrow which is found in the spinal vertebrae, (6) the testicles and (7) the gall bladder. Flowing blood is absolutely *ḥarām*. All other parts are *ḥalāl*. However, some narrations regard the kidney to be *makrūh* and it is considered *makrūh tanzīhī*. That is all.

Question 26

What is the ruling regarding taking a mortgage on a house and living in it without paying rent? Is it permissible, considered to be *ribā*, or is it *makrūh*? What is the extent of the sin? Some jurists say it is permissible to accept a mortgage and live in it without paying rent and that it is not *ribā*. This is because, when a mortgage is paid, it is permissible to assume control over the mortgaged item. The one who mortgaged the house pays for the repairs and maintenance of it in return for occupying it. Even if the house is worth five rupees for rent and the person spends four rupees on its repairs and maintenance, it is permissible because the person who accepted the mortgage is satisfied with the person taking responsibility for its repairs and considers these services to be in lieu of the rent.

Answer:

It is *harām* – like *ribā* (interest) – to derive any benefit from a mortgaged item. No jurist said it is permissible to occupy such a house. Yes, they said it is permissible to assume control of it, but assuming control does not necessarily mean occupation of the house. All these forms are *harām*. That is all.

Question 27

Hadrat presented a verbal explanation of his investigation on the issue of offering *salām*, or replying to a *salām*, while a person is using clods of clay [or stones] to cleanse himself after having relieved himself. I am presenting the gist of what I remember of his explanation.

Answer:

Drying the private part with clods of clay after urinating was not a common practice during the *khayr al-qurūn* (era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ). However, it is considered *mustahab* because it falls under the following instruction of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

استنزهوا عن البول فإن عامة عذاب القبر منه

"Be cautious of urine drops because the punishment of the grave will generally be as a result of carelessness in this regard."

Furthermore, people generally have weak bladders these days and thus, a few drops certainly flow after they have urinated. Those who wish, may observe it themselves. When they complete urinating and cleanse themselves with clods of clay, they must place their foot below the footboard – a few drops generally flow out at such a time. I advise those who perform ṣalāh behind a *ghayr muqallid* imām to repeat their ṣalāh, because the *ghayr muqallids* do not teach cleaning with clods of clay. When the underpants becomes *najis* due to these drops, the ṣalāh of the imām is not valid. How then can the *muqtadī's* ṣalāh be valid?

Obviously, when a person is busy drying himself with the clods of clay, he is not in a state of urinating. It is therefore not *makrūh* to offer *salām*, or reply to a *salām* in such a state. The prohibition of speech applies while a person is urinating because it is the time when his private area is exposed. When a person has completed urinating and is in the process of drying himself, he is not prohibited from speaking. How can it be impermissible to engage in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ or to reply to a *salām* in such a state? This is what I remember.

Question 28

Hadrat said: "The '*Alāmgīriyyah* considers an owl to be *halāl*. However, we noticed it hunting with its claws. It is therefore *harām*. Those who wrote that it is *halāl*, probably did not know how it hunts."

Question 29

Hadrat said: "If a lizard falls into a well and dies, or bursts open, the water does not become impure because it does not have flowing

blood. This is similar to a mosquito, butterfly or snake dying and bursting open in water — the water is not rendered impure. The jurists speak of a type of snake known as *sām abraṣ* which renders the water impure. It is a type of snake which has flowing blood.”

Question 30

If a debtor sends a money order to his creditor, who is liable to pay the cost of the money order?

Answer:

If the creditor asked for his money and permitted the debtor to send it by money order, the cost of the money order will be borne by the creditor. However, if the debtor sent it via money order of his own accord, he will have to bear the cost. That is all.

Question 31

There are three brothers. Two of them said to the third brother: “Apply to get the land to be classified as a wasteland by the Bhāwalpūr municipality.” He made an application and the land was classified as such in the name of all three brothers. After some time, the two brothers severed relations with their third brother and they both died soon thereafter. Their children asked their uncle for their father’s shares. Are they eligible for the shares?

Answer:

If the governor of Bhāwalpūr assumed possession and control of the land, the entire wasteland is *ghayr mamlūk* (not owned by anyone) — as is the case with land which is under the control of the ruler. When the governor granted permission for the reclamation of the barren land — no matter in whose name the permission was granted — the one who reclaims it becomes its sole owner. He has no partner, even if the municipal office should record it in someone else’s name.

However, in this case, it does not seem to be under the ownership

of the Bhāwalpūr municipality. It appears to have been given to the *nawāb* of Bhāwalpūr by the ruler, and therefore, the *nawāb* would be the owner of the entire piece of wasteland. Those who had made the application had applied for possession from the *nawāb*. Once the application was accepted, it was considered to be a *hibah* (a grant, gift). If two brothers permitted the third brother to apply and he applied for it in accordance with the permission which was given to him, after which the *nawāb* gave it in the name of all three brothers, it will be a *hibah* in the name of all three. The *wakīl* (representative who made the application i.e. third brother) is the *asīl* (actual and original person) with regard to his share [one third] and a *wakīl* on behalf of his two brothers. He accepted it and took possession of it. Since it is jointly owned, it is not only a *fāsid hibah* (invalid grant) according to the Imām, but also an invalid possession.

When both brothers left it, they said they did not need it and left it to one brother. It is also a *hibah* from them and it is not necessary to specifically state that it is a *hibah*. In this way, it came into the ownership of the one brother and left the ownership of the other two brothers. The act of *hibah* takes place even without uttering the word '*hibah*'.

After the death of the two brothers, the claim of the children is baseless. Had it come into ownership without the two brothers knowing about it, it would not even be considered to have come into their ownership, because neither acceptance of it nor possession of it took place by them. Therefore, in both cases, ownership falls under the one who took possession of it and exercised his power over it. The claims of the two brothers' children are baseless. A detailed explanation in this regard can be found in *Radd-e-Muhtār* under the chapters: *Bāb al-Hibah*, *Ihyā' Mawāt*, *Bāb 'Ushr wa Kharāj*. A brief explanation can be found in *Durr-e-Mukhtār* and *Hidāyah*.

Question 32

What decision do the '*ulamā*' of the *Dīn* pass on the following conversation which took place between an ascetic (*zāhid*) and a Sufi?

Sufi: It is wrong to speak ill of a person who commits an evil. Even if a person commits adultery or consumes alcohol, you must have good thoughts about him because there is the possibility of a hidden wisdom behind this. We come across stories of this nature about the *auliyā*' of Allāh ﷺ. In short, do not have evil thoughts about a person who commits an evil – he is possibly a *walī* from within.

Zāhid: An evil action will remain evil. It is wrong for us to have good thoughts about an evil action.

Sufi: You people who are the servants of the '*ulamā*'-e-*zawāhir* (those who only look at the outward) are worse than Shayṭān. You harbour enmity towards the *auliyā*' of Allāh ﷺ. It is your brothers who wronged them, regretted it and will remain disgraced forever. If you consider the outward actions only, then Mansūr *rahimahullāh* and Shams Tabrez *rahimahullāh* had outwardly made statements of *kufīr* when they said *أنا الحق* and *قم بإذني*. However, no one labelled them as *kuffār*. Yet, everyone labelled Pharaoh a *kāfir* and an outcast. Why are the first two considered *walīy-e-kāmil* and why is Pharaoh considered a *kāfir*? According to your outward assessment – Allāh ﷻ forbid – the same rule ought to apply to all of them. The *maulwīs* who ensured that they get punished, will themselves be punished for their sin, while they [Mansūr *rahimahullāh* and Shams Tabrez *rahimahullāh*] shall be rewarded for their statements.

Zāhid: If those '*ulamā*' will be punished and those personalities will be rewarded for their statements, you are correct. We will give up our beliefs and continue considering evil deeds to have some hidden wisdom behind them.

Answer:

The statements of the *zāhid* are correct and the statements of the Sufi are baseless. In fact, if a pious elder has committed a mistake, we must consider the act to be evil. We must not say it is good nor should we say that it has some hidden wisdom. At the same time, we must not talk ill of the pious elder. We are ordered to act on what is obvious. We are not ordered to investigate about the *bāṭin* (internal).

The *Sahīh Bukhārī*, which is the most authentic book after the Qur'ān, contains the following statement of *Hadrat 'Umar* ؓ:

"If we see a person outwardly evil, we will consider him to be evil even if he claims his internal self to be filled with good. If we see a person outwardly good, we will consider him to be good even if he is internally wicked."

The above statement of *Hadrat 'Umar* ؓ clearly shows that it is *wājib* upon us to rule according to that which is obvious. It is *ḥarām* for us to regard an evil to be permissible on the premise of a hidden wisdom. This is the reason why *Imām Abū Yūsuf*, a student of *sayyid al-'ulamā'* *Imām Abū Hanīfah raḥimahullāh*, and *Junayd of Baghdadī raḥimahullāh*, the *sayyid at-ṭā'ifah* and the source of all the *silsilahs*, both issued a *fatwā* for the killing of *Husayn ibn Mansūr*. Allāh forbid, it is not becoming of a Sufi to have evil thoughts about them. In fact, it is an ignorant person and a person belonging to a false creed who will hold such beliefs. Although *Husayn* was not labelled a *kāfir*, his statement was outwardly one of *kufr*. He was considered wrong and he was killed for his persistence on this statement even though it could have been rationalized and explained.

As for an act which is certainly *ḥarām* according to the *Sharī'ah* ... it cannot be rationalized. The lowest *Sahābī* ؓ is millions of times superior to the highest *walī*. (Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* who was the leader of the *awliyā'* said: "I am not

even equal to the dust of the shoes of the lowest Sahābī ﷺ.”) When any Sahābī ﷺ committed an evil, nobody rationalized it, nor did Rasūlullāh ﷺ excuse the person. Instead, he meted out the punishment for the evil. There are many details in this regard.

The statements of the Sufi are baseless while the *zāhid* is correct. Allāh ﷻ knows best and His Knowledge is Most Perfect and Absolute.

Question 33

What is the ruling of the Sharī'ah with regard to free-flying crows which fly around in the towns and villages? Are they *halāl* or *harām*? The jurists classify some types of crows as *halāl* and others as *harām*. Is the type which we are talking about *halāl* or *harām*?

Answer:

The books of jurisprudence use different words to specify the types of crows. However, these books state that the basis of differentiating between them is related to the type of food which they eat. Even if these crows which are found in the towns and villages are not classified as 'aq'aq (magpie), there is still no doubt about their permissibility because, if they eat everything – impure things, grains and seeds, their permissibility will be similar to that of the magpie – whether they are known as magpies or not. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, *may Allāh ﷻ pardon him*.

Question 34

Zayd claims to be a Hanafī but he speaks highly of Maulwī Nadhīr Husayn Dehlawī and frequents him. He says: “The beliefs of the *ghayr muqallids* as mentioned in *Jāmi' ash-Shawāhid* are incorrect and the author slandered the *ghayr muqallids*.” Zayd joins the *ghayr muqallids* most, if not all the time, and performs *salāh* in their Musjid. Now he wants to become an imām in a Hanafī Musjid. He says: “What is wrong with the *imāmat* of a person who speaks

in praise of *ghayr muqallids*? I can prove the validity of the *imāmat* of the Shī'ah and Khārijīs from the Hanafī books."

Is it permissible to perform *ṣalāh* behind such a person and to listen to his talks? Kindly provide an absolute decision so that mutual conflict could be avoided.

Answer:

Allāh ﷻ Alone knows the unseen, but the situation at present is that the *ghayr muqallids* resort to *taqīyyah* (concealment) and, by and large, claim to be Hanafīs. In truth, they consider Hanafīs to be *mushriks* (polytheists).

When he was in Makkah Mu'azzamah, Maulwī Nadhīr Husayn exonerated himself [from being a *ghayr muqallid*], took an oath and claimed that he was a Hanafī. However, when he returned to India, he remained an ardent *ghayr muqallid* and is still one (to this day). If this is the condition of their leader, what can be said about his followers?

We have heard from reliable sources that Maulwī Nadhīr Husayn has made a statement that the Hanafīs are worse than the Hindus. His own devoted students say that *taqlīd shakhsī* is *shirk*. How is it possible for a person who speaks highly of them to be a Hanafī? Based on the outward, his claims are not acceptable. Without doubt, other *ghayr muqallids* also distance themselves from *Jāmi' ash-Shawāhid*. However, the quotations which the author provides are most certainly not fabricated. I have studied some parts of the book and have confirmed some of these beliefs verbally from a few reliable *ghayr muqallids* who also testify to this. Zayd's statement is therefore not convincing.

Zayd's situation, as described by you, seems to confirm that he is a *ghayr muqallid*. His claim of being able to prove the validity of the *imāmat* of the Shī'ah and Khārijīs from Hanafī books is incorrect.

This is also proof that he is a *ghayr muqallid*. No book states the validity of the *imāmat* of a Shī'ah or Khārijī who are on the level of *kufī*.

As for the one who is on the level of *fisq* (who is classified a *fāsiq*) and not on the level of *kufī* ... his *imāmat* is *makrūh tahrīmī*. Those who willingly appoint him as an imām are sinners. The majority of the Shī'ah and Khārijīs of the early times fell under this category.

The present *ghayr muqallids*, as defined by the author of *Jāmi' ash-Shawāhid*, could be classified as *fāsiqs*. Those who consider the Hanafīs to be *mushriks* and believe *taqlīd-e-shakhṣī* to be *shirk* are *fāsiqs* without a doubt. Their *imāmat* is *makrūh tahrīmī* and it is *harām* to knowingly appoint them as imāms. The *ṣalāh* of their *muqtadīs* will be valid, but with *karāhat-e-tahrīmah* (it will be *makrūh*). However, such a *ṣalāh* will only be valid provided it is not accompanied by any *mufsid-e-ṣalāh* (an act which invalidates *ṣalāh*). This group (this specific group of *ghayr muqallids*) does not consider vomit or flowing blood to break *wudū'*. If they are going to become *imāms* with such a *wudū'*, how can the *ṣalāh* of the Hanafīs behind them be valid?

Once in Gangoh, a *ghayr muqallid* first performed the *fard* of *zuhr* on a Friday before the Jumu'ah *ṣalāh*. The people – out of ignorance – thought he was a *maulwī Sāhib* and asked him to lead them in the Jumu'ah *ṣalāh*. He then testified to the people about his action. From this you can gauge the level of their concealment and deception. He, Maulwī Barkat 'Alī, was a student of Nadhīr Husayn. According to the Hanafī rules, his Jumu'ah, after having performed *zuhr ṣalāh* has gone to waste. This is the condition of these people.

Provided a *ghayr muqallid* does not commit an action which invalidates *ṣalāh*, he may lead the *ṣalāh*, but it will be considered *makrūh* to follow him. If he should consider Hanafīs to be

mushriks, it is *harām* to appoint him as an imām and he cannot be relied upon.

As for the *ghayr muqallid* who acts strictly according to the Hadīth, who is completely devoid of acting according to his own desires, who acts according to the Hadīth, sincerely and solely for the Sake of Allāh ﷻ, does not speak ill of any *muqallid* and considers everybody to be on the truth ... we have not seen such a *ghayr muqallid*. He must be concealed somewhere. At present, everyone – young, old, educated and ignorant – claim to be a Hanafī, but believes *taqlīd-e-shakhsī* to be *shirk* and openly states it. All their claims are false and, upon investigation, they are proven to be charlatans.

You should most certainly not appoint such a person as an imām and the masses should not listen to his talks. This could have evil consequences. The consequences of abstention from *taqlīd* are very evil. Allāh ﷻ knows best. Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī.

Question 35

I conclude this section with the following statement of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī which he made with particular attention. He specifically asked for it to be conveyed unto others because people in general are negligent of it, and their negligence in this regard is very detrimental.

He said: "If the *muqtadī* completes his *salām* before the imām completes his *salām*, the *ṣalāh* of the *muqtadī* will be invalid."⁴³

⁴³ In most cases, when the imām says *As-salāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullāh*, he says it by pulling and extending the words and turns his face. On the other hand, the *muqtadī* completes saying these words quite quickly. If a *muqtadī* completes saying *wa rahmatullāh* before the imām can complete saying them, the *ṣalāh* of the *muqtadī* will be invalidated because he completed his *ṣalāh* before the imām. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

I now conclude this chapter by quoting fifty *fatāwā* which Hadrat wrote with his own hands.

FATĀWĀ

Question 1

A Shaykh takes on *murīds* with this intention:

“Whenever I have any need, I will ask my *murīds* for money.”

His essential objective is the fulfilment of his needs and, by the way, he also sees to their guidance. He takes money from his *murīds* by force, saying: “You people are my *murīds*. Why do you not give me money for my expenses?” He makes a collection from all of them and takes money from them. Is it permissible to become a *murīd* at the hands of such a Shaykh? Is such a person worthy of being a Shaykh?

Answer:

A person – such as the one described in the question – is not worthy of *bay'ah* because among the prerequisites which the *mashā'ikh* lay down for the acceptance of *bay'ah* is *zuhd 'an ad-dunyā* (abstinence from the world).

قال الشيخ ولي الله قدس سره والشرط الثالث أن يكون زاهدا في الدنيا راغبا في الآخرة، الخ

Shaykh Walī Allāh said:

“The third prerequisite is that he must abstain from the world and be desirous of the Hereafter...”

The person who takes on *murīds* with the objective of acquiring wealth is actually accumulating the world through the means of teaching *Dīn*. He is making the genuine means of reaching Allāh ﷻ a means of earning the paltry gains of this world. He is included in the warning which is issued in the Hadīth:

يخرج في آخر الزمان رجال يختلون الدنيا بالدين، الخ

*"There shall come, towards the end of time,
[when there will be] people who will interpolate
the acquisition of the world through religion..."*

Such a person is certainly not worthy of being a Shaykh and it is not permissible to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 2

What is the necessary gap between the imām and the *janāzah* (deceased)? What is the maximum permissible distance between the imām and the *janāzah*? Kindly explain with references.

Answer:

The distance which is an obstacle to any normal congregational *ṣalāh* between the imām and the *muqtadī* is the same between the imām of a *janāzah ṣalāh* and the *janāzah*. This is because *ittihād-e-makān* (unison in place) between the imām and the *janāzah* is a prerequisite for the validity of *ṣalāh*.

This is clearly stated in *Sharḥ Munīyah* and other books of jurisprudence. The *janāzah* is – to a certain extent – considered an imām. Thus, the distance which is an obstacle between the imām and the *muqtadī* will also be an obstacle between the *janāzah* and the imām.

قال في الدر المختار ويمنع من الاقتداء خلاء في الصحراء يسع صفين، الخ

It is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

"A gap in an open field which can accommodate two rows is an obstacle to iqtidā'."

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 3

Is it permissible to perform *janāzah salāh* continuously in the Musjid because a large field is not available nearby? If such an excuse exists, where is it preferable to perform *janāzah salāh* – on the street or in the Musjid? What is the ruling of performing it in the Musjid without any valid excuse?

Answer:

It is permissible to perform *janāzah salāh* on the road because of the above reason. It is *makrūh* to perform it in the Musjid. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 4

Is it permissible to say يا شيخ عبد القادر جيلاني شينا الله (Oh Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī! I ask you for Allāh), or any other similar words which indicate seeking help and assistance from the pious elders, if they are found in a *ruqyah* (incantation) and are read with the belief that such words will bring about some effect from Allāh ﷻ through which one will be able to fulfil one's objectives – while one still believes that Allāh ﷻ Alone is the Doer in every matter? Can the baselessness and falsehood of such words be proven by the verse:

فلما آتاهما صالحًا جعلا له شركاء

*“When He bestowed them with a righteous child,
they ascribed partners to Him.”*

Can this be done even though it may lead to corruption of beliefs among the masses?

Answer:

It is not permissible to say such words under any condition. If they are uttered with the belief that he [Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh*] has knowledge of the unseen and has personal power

[to do things], then it is *shirk*. If these words are said without such a belief and merely for literal blessing, it is considered *makrūh*, but not permissible. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 5

What is the original *madh-hab* of Imām Sāhib with regard to *mu'ānaqah* (embracing each other)? What is the ruling of *mu'ānaqah* after the 'īd *ṣalāh*? Is it permissible, desirable or *makrūh* (undesirable). If it is *makrūh*, is it *tahrīmī* or *tanzihī*?

Answer:

Mu'ānaqah is permissible provided there is no *Dīnī* harm in it. If there is any *Dīnī* harm, it is *makrūh tahrīmī* and *ḥarām* on the basis of the *Hadīth*:

لَقَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ نَهَى عَنِ الْمَكَامَةِ، الْحَدِيثُ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ prohibited *mukā'amah*.

The word *mukā'amah* means *mu'ānaqah*. If there is no *Dīnī* harm in it then it is *mubāḥ*. If a certain time is specified for it, it will become a *bid'ah*. For example: The masses consider it necessary and essential to embrace one another after the 'īd *ṣalāh* and if a person does not practise it, they object as though he had left out a *wājib* act. Due to the corruption of the belief of the masses – and the elite are like the masses – it is considered to be a *bid'ah*.

Shaking hands (*muṣāfahah*) is *Sunnah*, but it has become a *bid'ah* due to the fact that it has been restricted to specific times.

قال في رد المحتار يقال ان المواظبة عليها بعد الصلوات خاصة قد يؤدي الجهلة إلى اعتقاد سنيتهما في خصوص هذا الموضع وأن لها خصوصية زائدة في هذا الموضع على غيرها مع أن ظاهر كلامهم وأنه لم يفعلها أحد

من السلف في هذه المواضع ونقل في تبين المحارم عن الملتقط انه تكره المصافحة بعد الصلوة لكل حال، الخ

The *Radd al-Muhtār* states:

“To make *musāfahah* regularly, specifically after every *salāh*, could lead the ignoramuses to believe that it is a Sunnah which is to be performed at these specific times and that it enjoys a greater significance on such specific occasions and not at other occasions. Whereas the obvious statements of the jurists show that no one from the past practised this on these (specific) occasions. It is stated in *Tabyīn al-Mahārim* from *al-Multaqat* that it is *makrūh* to make *musāfahah* after the *salāh* under all circumstances.”

In short, if a Sunnah *musāfahah* has become a *bid'ah* through this restriction, it will be more necessary to consider a *mu'ānaqah*, which is *mubāh*, to be a *bid'ah*. This is especially so in situations of corruption such as the day of 'īd. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 6

If women are on the [flat] roof of a house which is a few feet away from the Musjid, and they follow the imām because they can hear his recitation, will their *salāh* be valid, despite the fact that their row may be opposite the men's row? Will their *fard* be fulfilled?

Answer:

Their *iqtidā'* (following) will be valid, provided that the house is situated at such a distance that there is no road between the house and the Musjid which would permit a vehicle to drive through. The gap between the house and Musjid should be very small. If there is a gap which would permit a vehicle to drive through, their *salāh* would not be valid.

قال في الدر المختار ويمنع من الإقتداء طريق تجري فيه العجلة، انتهى

Ad-Durr al Mukhtār states:

"A road which is wide enough for a vehicle to go through makes *iqtidā'* impermissible."

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 7

For the last fourteen years the whereabouts of Zayd are not known. Despite intense searches, he cannot be found. His young wife of eighteen to twenty years of age is present. She has no means of income. She has been selling her jewellery and continuing her existence in this way. The jewellery has now all been sold. If she were to go to people's houses to take up domestic jobs, there is the possibility of great *fitnah* (falling into sin). She has no relatives who could see to her needs and undertake to protect her. She only has her mother and her mother has been of no help. Thus, she has no one to see to her and she has no alternative but to seek employment. There is the possibility of *fitnah* if she were to take up such domestic jobs. Is it permissible to get her married to someone?

Answer:

On the basis of necessity, it is permissible to practise on the ruling of Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* who says: "After the expiry of four years plus the *'iddah* of death (four months and ten days), the wife of a person who is classified *mafqud* (missing) may enter into a new marriage. Thus, in the above situation, it is permissible to get the wife of the *mafqud* married to someone else. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 8

If the *khuf* (leather socks) is stitched till below the ankle, though the exact spot of the ankle and above is covered by a binding, would it be permissible to make *masah* on such a *khuf*?

Answer:

If half the *khuf* – i.e. till below the ankle – is stitched and tied from above to the extent where a space equal to three fingers does not

become exposed when the person is walking, it would be permissible to make *masah* on such a *khuf*.

Question 9

If a *khuf* is made of a thick, course and strong cotton material, will *masah* on it be permissible?

Answer:

If a material is thick to the extent of not absorbing water and it does not slip down when walking, it may be used to make a *khuf* and *masah* on it would be permissible.

Question 10

If a bee-hive is attached to someone's property, will it be classified as a possession before the removal and taking of the honey?

Answer:

It is permissible to break off a bee-hive from someone else's property, provided it is not removed with water etc. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 11

Due to our lack of determination, some of us do not perform *tahajjud salāh*. Our deprivation of this bounty causes us much remorse. It is difficult for us to be consistent and regular and we do not even perform it during the blessed month of *Ramadān*. However, there is one way in which we will be able to perform it with ease. If we are given permission to do this, and there is no reprehensibility in doing it like this, we will be able to benefit from this great bounty throughout the month. This way is to perform it with congregation during the last part of the night and one *pārā/juz* will be recited during the *tahajjud* each day. We will do as you instruct us.

Answer:

If there are three *muqtadīs* (followers) and one *imām* in the *tahajjud* congregation, it is permissible. However, *iltizām* (strict adherence) to performing it with congregation is not permissible. You may read it with congregation occasionally and without congregation at other times. Strict adherence will cause the same damage. It is due to this that the jurists have prohibited its performance in this way. The one who is unable to perform *tahajjud* regularly should perform *nafl ṣalāh* during the first part of the night. He will receive the reward for *tahajjud*. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 12

If the rope of a well remains laying on impure ground, gets messed with mud, is trampled upon by people and then goes into the well, or it becomes wet and its water drips into the well, will the well be considered impure (*najis*) according to the *Hanafī madh-hab*?

If the rope touches wet hands, will the hands become impure?

If these hands touch the water and bucket, what will the ruling be with regard to the water and the bucket?

Answer:

If the impure nature of a rope is known with certainty, the water will become impure the moment that the rope is immersed into it. There is no doubt regarding this according to the *Hanafī madh-hab*. In like manner, if the hands touch such a rope, they are no longer pure, but they become impure. However, the entire issue is based upon whether the ground is impure and it has to be checked for purity. If it is impure, the rope which falls on such ground and the hands which touch such a rope will cause the well to become impure. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 13

A well is used by both Hindus and Muslims. It is quite certain that the bucket or container with which a Hindu fills water is plastered with dung and placed in an impure place. The Hindus touch the

bucket or container with impure hands and the same bucket or container is tainted by their impure clothes and then lowered into the well. Whether this well is inside a building, outside, or on a public road — will the water in this well be considered pure or impure under such circumstances?

What would be the case if the well is inside the house of a Muslim? If Hindus fill water from it, bath from it and drops of water from their bodies fall into it, will the water of such a well be pure?

Answer:

In matters concerning water, an attitude of accommodation is adopted due to necessity (*durūrah*). If it is an issue of contention among the *mujtahidīn*, the jurists say it is permissible to accept the view which is more accommodating at times of inconvenience and general suffering (*haraj* and *'umūm-e-balwā*). Therefore, in such a situation, as long as the actual falling of impurity cannot be ascertained and literally seen, we cannot say that the water is impure. In fact, even if it is seen to fall into the water, we cannot say it is impure because of necessity and general suffering.

Consider this: The droppings of camels and goats are impure according to Imām Sāhib [Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*]. However, in the jungle, if even half the water is filled with their droppings, the water is still considered pure on the basis of necessity. This is because these droppings are not impure according to Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*.

Now in India — especially in the villages — there is constant interaction with the droppings and urine of cows, oxen etc. The water can never remain pure. Such matters will therefore have to be overlooked. As long as the impurity is not literally seen — in fact, even if it is seen — one may continue using the water. This is what can be gauged from the books of jurisprudence.

Question 14

The imām performed the *fard* of *maghrib*, '*ishā*, *fajr* or *jumu'ah* with congregation. He either read less than three verses, equal to three verses or more than three verses and then erred in his recitation. One of the *muqtadīs* corrected him, he accepted the correction and completed the *ṣalāh*. Is the *ṣalāh* valid?

Answer:

The correct opinion is that one's *ṣalāh* does not break by correcting one's imām irrespective of whether there was a need to correct him or not, whether the imām accepts the correction or not and whether he is corrected before three verses or after. The *ṣalāh* of neither the imām nor the *muqtadī* is invalidated in any of these situations.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 15

A person accepted interest [usury] over a period of time and accumulated some money. He then repented sincerely for this sin. Is it now permissible for him to use this money for himself? If it is not permissible, can he give it to someone else? If he cannot give it to anyone, what should he do with it?

Answer:

Money accumulated from interest does not become *halāl* through repentance, but the sin is pardoned through repentance. A person's right cannot be pardoned through repentance. It is necessary for him to return the money to the people from whom he took it as interest. If he does not know who they are, is unable to establish their whereabouts or that of their heirs, it is *wājib* upon him to give it in charity as *īsāl-e-thawāb* (sending reward) in the name of those to whom the money belongs. It must be given to such poor people who have no food to feed themselves. It is incorrect for him to expect any reward for himself for this charity. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 16

A person lives next to a Musjid, but does not come to the Musjid to perform his *fajr salāh*. His excuse for not coming is that, by the time he wakes up, relieves himself, and performs *wudū'*, the congregation is over. He says: "When the *Sahābah* ﷺ could not attend the congregation for the *fajr salāh* due to some reason, they would perform it at home out of shame. That is why I also read it at home." Is this excuse of his valid?

Answer:

Performing *salāh* in congregation is *wājib* according to some scholars and no one denies that it is at least *sunnat-e-mu'akkadah*. If a person occasionally misses the congregational *salāh* because of some valid excuse, there is hope for his pardon. However, if a person regularly leaves out the congregational *salāh*, or any specific congregational *salāh*, does not make amends for it and does not bother about rectifying himself, he is classified a *fāsiq* and it is essential for him to give up this action. However, if he is certain that the congregation is over, it is not essential for him to come to the Musjid. He may perform it at home or in the Musjid. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 17

There is a person by the name of Zayd who is an absolute ignorant mischief maker. He is an irreligious person and has nothing to do with *salāh* and fasting. He imposes hardships upon his wife and utters statements of *kufir* and *shirk*. Consequently, he has even referred to *Hadrat 'Alī* ﷺ as 'god'. He also has other incorrect beliefs. Does divorce fall on his wife by him uttering such blasphemous statements?

Answer:

If his statements are clearly of *kufir* and there is no way of rationalizing them, then he is a *murtad* (apostate) and his marriage will be annulled. After the annulment of the marriage, his wife has

to observe the 'iddah. Upon completion of her 'iddah, she may marry someone else.

Question 18

Is it permissible to drink water from copper and bell-metal utensils?

Answer:

It is permissible to use copper and other types of utensils provided it is not done in emulation (*tashabbuh*) of any nation. If it entails emulation, it will become impermissible. If the same utensil [which entails emulation in one place] does not entail emulation in another place, then it will be permissible to use it. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 19

The period of breast-feeding according to Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* is two and half years, two years according to *Sāhibayn* [Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* and Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*] and three years according to Imām Zufar *rahimahullāh*. Is it permissible to go beyond this period for an infant who is weak and frail? Is the period of breast-feeding for a boy and girl the same?

Answer:

The most correct and *muftā bihi* (the opinion upon which the *fatwā* is issued) view is that breast-feeding should not exceed two years. It is not permissible to breast-feed a child beyond this period on the premise that he is weak and frail. The period is the same for a boy and girl.

قال في الدر المختار ولم يبح الإرضاع بعد مدته، الخ

It is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

"Breast-feeding after the stipulated period of breast-feeding is not permissible."

That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 20

If a *mu'takif* (person performing *i'tikāf*) speaks while he is out of the Musjid, does his *i'tikāf* remain valid? If it is not valid, what does the Sharī'ah say about him completing his *i'tikāf* by making another intention?

Answer:

It is permissible under all conditions for a *mu'takif* to speak outside the Musjid. It does not cause any defect in the *i'tikāf*. Speaking both inside and outside the Musjid is the same. If a person has spoken while out of the Musjid and thought it invalidated his *i'tikāf* and thus necessitated the renewal of his intention, there will be no harm in this either. His first *i'tikāf* will still be valid.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 21

Most English [allopathic] medicines contain alcohol or alcohol essence. Since there is no alternative medication where we live, what should we do? What is the ruling with regard to applying ointment or perfume which contains alcohol essence and performing *ṣalāh* in such a state?

Answer:

A medicine which contains alcohol or alcohol essence is *najis* (impure) and it will be *ḥarām* to use it because it is impure according to the Sharī'ah. Such treatment should be abandoned. Similarly, perfume which contains alcohol essence will be *najis*, the clothing will also be *najis* and impermissible to wear. This is the answer to the *mas'alah*.

With regard to there being no alternative treatment ... It will be better to abstain from the above treatment. However, if one is compelled to use it, it will be *mubāh* (permissible). If you have to

use the medication in such a situation, protect the body and clothing from contamination and keep the utensil [which is used for the medication] clean and pure.

Question 22

If a person does not experience any concentration in his ṣalāh or wazīfah, will it be valid?

Answer:

Ṣalāh which is performed without concentration will absolve the person of the compulsory duty. Concentration is not a compulsory act of ṣalāh. A wazīfah which is read without concentration will earn a person reward, but there is more reward if it is read with concentration. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 23

Some ghee was heated and kept aside. A child put his impure hand in it. How can it be purified? If the ghee was a small amount, it would not have been a problem to throw it away. However, this ghee is worth seven to eight rupees.

Answer:

If the ghee has hardened, remove the portion which was touched by the hand and you may consume the remainder. You may purify the portion which you removed. If the ghee was in a liquid form – as normally happens in summertime – you will have to purify the entire amount. Ghee is purified as follows:

Water must be added to the ghee to the extent that the water remains at the bottom of the container and the ghee above the water. Heat the ghee until it melts and the water has evaporated. Follow this procedure three times and the ghee will be purified. Although the ghee loses its fragrance through this procedure, you may add cardamom (*elachie*) etc. to give it a fragrance. You may then consume it.

Question 24

A person entered into a business partnership with another person who has interest money or usurped wealth. Will the pure wealth of the first partner become impure through this partnership? Will this cause any prohibition and impurity in the profits?

Answer:

If impure wealth is mixed with any wealth, all the wealth is rendered impure because the two cannot be differentiated. If impure wealth, such as interest money, is separated from the amount and returned to the person from whom it was received, the remaining wealth will become lawful. If the person [from whom the interest was taken] or his heirs cannot be found, the money must be given in charity with the intention of the rightful owners receiving what is due to them on the Day of Resurrection. The same applies to usurped [or ill-gotten] wealth. That is all.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 25

When calculating zakāh on trade goods, does one take the cost price, plus expenses into consideration, or is the sale price with the intended purchase margin considered?

Answer:

When calculating zakāh on such items, their market value at the end of the zakāh year is considered. The original purchase price is not considered. Whether the value has dropped or increased, the market value on the day the zakāh is calculated must be considered.

Question 26

A worker earns a monthly wage and uses his income for his daily expenses. How will zakāh be *wājib* on him and how will he pay it? If, during the course of the year, he gives an amount as zakāh periodically, should it be included in his calculation?

Answer:

The moment a worker received an amount of cash e.g. Rs 50, he became the owner of *niṣāb*. In one month he spent Rs 30 and was left with Rs 20. He then received another salary [the following month] and he now had Rs 70. He spent some of it and some remained. When the year ends, he should see how much money he has with him and only pay zakāh on that amount – e.g. he saved Rs 20 each month and accumulated Rs 240 by the end of the year. He must pay zakāh on this total. This works out to Rs 6.

If he had been giving zakāh periodically during the course of the year, he must look at how much he has at the end of the year and how much he gave as zakāh during the course of the year. If he has given equal to the amount which he has accumulated, his obligation of zakāh has been fulfilled. If he gave less than the accumulated amount, he must pay the balance at that time. If he gave extra, he may include it in his calculations for the following year. Any amount which he gave earlier in the year [before becoming an owner of *niṣāb*] should not be considered. This amount will be to the benefit of the giver. That is all.

Question 27

A person offered an item for sale to a buyer at a certain price and then offered the same item to another buyer at a different price. Alternatively, he offered an item for sale to a buyer at a certain price, but then gave it to the same buyer at a lesser price. Is it correct to do this?

Answer:

A person has full choice over his possession. He can sell it for one rupee to one person and for ten rupees to another person. There is nothing wrong in doing this. To quote a higher price and then reduce it is permissible, but it is a type of lie. However, since there is no escape from this in present times, there is no sin in it. If honesty is adhered to, everyone will adopt it. If it were possible, it would be

better to do this. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 28

Is it permissible to trade in (1) dead dried fish which is common in Burma and Bengal, (2) tobacco, and (3) bread which contains palm juice [a type of fermented juice]? What is the ruling with regard to having a stall at fairs and festivals which are organized by *kuffār*?

Answer:

It is permissible to trade in dry and fresh fish. If it is permissible to eat it, why should it be impermissible to trade in it? Dead fish is not ḥarām. It is makrūh to trade in tobacco, although the money which accrues from its sale is not ḥarām because it is classified as māl (wealth). However, since it is makrūh [to consume tobacco], trading in it entails aiding in something which is makrūh. That is why it is considered makrūh to trade in it. Bread which contains palm juice is ḥarām according to Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*, because he considers palm juice to be similar to alcohol. Trading in it will also be impermissible. Imām Sāhib [Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*] considers its consumption permissible and therefore its trade will also be permissible. However, the *fatwā* is issued on the opinion of Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*. One should therefore exercise caution. It is ḥarām to attend the fairs and festivals of the *kuffār* and trading there is also ḥarām. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 29

If a person breeds cows and buffaloes for the purpose of selling their milk, how should zakāh be calculated on these animals? Is it permissible to sell the milk of a cow which has calves? In the case where a person has a horse which he hires out, or an ox which draws a wagon, and the value of these animals is Rs 100 or even more – is it wājib to pay zakāh on them?

Answer:

If an animal is fed by one's own wealth [by providing it with hay,

grass, water etc.] and the owner sells its milk, there is no zakāh to be paid on it. However, if animals graze in the open fields, it will be *wājib* to pay zakāh on them provided the person owns the minimum number of animals, or more than the minimum number, on which zakāh is *wājib* and that he has had these animals in his ownership for one year.

If an animal is bred for the purpose of trade and its value is equal to *niṣāb*, zakāh will have to be paid on it. If not, zakāh will not be *wājib*. Thus, if a person purchases cows, buffaloes etc. for the sake of trade, zakāh on their total value will have to be paid. There is no harm in selling the milk of a cow which has calves. If, at the end of the year, a person has an amount of money which he has accumulated from the sale of milk, he must add it to his other wealth and pay zakāh on the entire amount.

There is no zakāh to be paid on animals which are hired out. They are neither classified as *sā'imah* (free grazing animals of the jungle) nor are they classified as animals for trade. The same applies to oxen which are used to draw wagons.

Question 30

A person is employed by someone. Whenever his employer needs to go somewhere for work which is considered to be impermissible according to the Sharī'ah, he takes this employee with for the sake of serving him and seeing to his needs. The employee is forced to go. What ruling does the Sharī'ah give with regard to this Muslim who is serving and helping his *fāsiq* or *kāfir* employer?

Answer:

If an employer goes on a journey which is sinful, the employee may accompany him for the sake of serving him and seeing to his needs. However, he must not join him in the evil itself. Whether he is employed by a *kāfir* and *mushrik*, or a Muslim *fāsiq*, it is permissible to carry out his tasks and accompany him because he is

doing it as an employee. That is all. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 31

A few Ahādīth are quoted in view of the present plague which we are experiencing. What is the status of these Ahādīth? Are they authentic or weak? I am quoting two such Ahādīth and want to know the level of their authenticity.

إذا سمعتم بالطاعون بارض فلا تدخلوها وإذا وقع بارض وأنتم فيها فلا
تخرجوا منها

"When you hear of a plague afflicting an area, do not enter it. If a plague afflicts an area in which you are, do not leave the area."

ومن فرّ كان كالفار من الزحف

"The one who flees [from a plague-stricken area] is like a person who flees from the battlefield."

Assuming these Ahādīth are authentic, what does the word أرض (land, area, place) refer to? Does it refer to a city, village, place of residence or a district in a city? Specify what it refers to.

Is the prohibition contained in this Hadīth *tahrīmī* or *tanzīhī*? Will a person who does not adhere to this prohibition be classified as a sinner according to the Sharī'ah?

What does the word فرار (fleeing) in the second Hadīth mean? Does it have a general meaning of leaving a plague-stricken place, or does it refer to a specific type of leaving e.g. a resident of a city goes away to a village, or goes to another city? Explain what it refers to.

My other question is: What is the reasoning behind this prohibition?

We have noticed in most cases that those who have left a plague-stricken area with their families have not been afflicted by the plague, while those who remained, were by and large destroyed. Based upon this, the British use this as proof that one should leave such a place as a way of medical preventative treatment. Thus, if a person leaves such a place with the intention of medical treatment, he cannot be classified as a sinner according to the Sharī'ah because his intention is not to flee. Instead, it is to change his place of residence with the purpose of medical treatment and this is permitted in the Sharī'ah.

Answer:

These Ahādīth are authentic and they mean the following:

If a city is struck by a plague, one must not leave it and go to another city because it smacks of impoliteness, fleeing from fate and placing one's full trust on one's own plans, whereas a Muslim ought to be fully satisfied with his fate and steadfast. Thereafter he is permitted to adopt his own plans. If all the people should leave a plague-stricken city and go to another city, there will be no one to see to the sick and deceased of the city. If they should leave one district of the city and go to another district, or to the surrounding areas, whereby they could still see to the needs of the city dwellers, it would be permissible. If a person leaves a city for the purpose of medical treatment, the prohibition will still apply and he will still be considered a sinner. However, if he leaves the city for some other valid reason – for instance, if he is a government employee and he goes on leave – it will not be sinful for him to leave the city.

Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Question 32

To Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmād Sāhib, may Allāh ﷻ perpetuate his blessings. As-salāmu 'alaykum.

I have a few questions and hope you will honour me by answering them in sequence.

1. Nūh ؑ ordered his people to seek forgiveness and enumerated the benefits of *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness). Are these benefits specifically for them or for us as well?

2. There are many places in the Qur'ān where we are instructed to seek forgiveness and authentic Ahādīth contain many virtues for this. With which words of *istighfār*, and with what number of repetitions, can these virtues be acquired? Will the virtues be acquired by simply saying *astaghfirullāh*, or

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

or

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

Which of the above three forms is the most virtuous?

Through which amount of repetitions can the promised virtue be acquired?

3. In the time it takes to read *astaghfirullāh* 1000 times, one can read the 2nd or 3rd forms [mentioned above] 300 times. Which would therefore be better to read, the first one 1000 times, or the second or third one 300 times?

4. If *istighfār* is read without concentration and presence of heart, will the benefits of *istighfār* be acquired, or will he be a sinner for reading it without concentration?

5. A person was honoured with the privilege of visiting Rasūlullāh's ﷺ grave and is thus able to correctly picture the grave in his mind. Now, if he should read *durūd* and picture himself sitting in front of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ grave and this visualization causes his heart to soften and his love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ to increase, would

reading *durūd* with such a visualization be considered idol-worship? Will the reader be sinning or will he be rewarded? Is the softening of his heart and the increase in the love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ which his *durūd* is causing inspired by Allāh ﷻ or is it a whispering from Shaytān?

6. Which of the following two *durūds* are better:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

or

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ بِعَدَدِ كُلِّ مَغْلُومٍ لَكَ

In the same time which it takes me to read the second *durūd* 500 times, I can read the first *durūd* 1000 times. Is there a greater reward for the first 1000 times, or is the reward greater for the second 500 times?

7. The time for *ishrāq salāh* is when the sun rises to the height of a spear [about fifteen minutes after sunrise]. A person is in the habit of reading his *wazīfahs* until 9:00 a.m. Must such a person interrupt his *wazīfahs* inbetween in order to perform *ishrāq salāh* and then continue with his *wazīfahs* until 9:00 a.m., or may he perform *ishrāq salāh* at 9:00 a.m. after completing his *wazīfahs*?

Answer:

As-salāmu 'alaykum. I received your letter and learnt of your condition. I was ill since Rabī' al-Awwal and I am still feeling a bit weak and feverish. I have stopped conducting lessons and all my other occupations have ceased. There is a widespread epidemic of fever in all these areas. May Allāh ﷻ show Mercy on all of us.

These are the answers to your questions:

1. The benefits of *istighfār*, as enumerated by Hadrat Nūh عليه السلام,

apply to this *ummah* as well. The Qur'ān has mentioned them to us in order to convey them to us.

2 & 3. The word *istighfār* means "seeking forgiveness". Any word which is used to seek forgiveness is classified as *istighfār* – irrespective of its language and tense. If a person says: "O Allāh! I make *taubah*," it would also be considered as *istighfār*. If he says: "O Allāh! Forgive me," it would also be *istighfār*.

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ and اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي are also forms of *istighfār*. In short, no matter which word of *istighfār* is uttered, the virtue of it will be acquired. However, there is more reward in uttering the words or phrases which are mentioned in the Ahādīth. Therefore the words:

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

are more meritorious. Furthermore, they contain the *kalimah tauhīd* (expressing the One-ness of Allāh ﷻ) and some of His attributes. However, when it comes to *istighfār* itself, they are all the same. If, for example, you are able to say *astaghfirullah* 1000 times in one hour and the above *istighfār* which is mentioned in the Ḥadīth 100 times in one hour, the *astaghfirullah* will be superior as a form of *istighfār*, while the above *istighfār* will be superior on the basis of the *kalimah tauhīd* which it contains. Neither enjoys absolute superiority over the other. One is superior in certain aspects, while the other is superior in other aspects.

4. The merits and virtues of *istighfār* are not acquired if it is done without concentration and presence of heart. At the same time, it is not devoid of reward.

5. Although picturing the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ at the time of reading *durūd* is not considered to be idol-worship, I do not approve of it.

6. The answer to your question on *istighfār* [answers 2&3] apply to *durūd* as well.

7. The time for *ishrāq salāh* commences when the sun rises to the height of a spear and it remains until one quarter of the day expires. One may perform it at anytime during this period, but it is preferable to delay it. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

I started writing this letter myself but could not continue because of my fever. I therefore dictated it to someone and am sending it to you. Was salām.

Question 33

There is a big difference between the *auliyā' Allāh* and the *Sahābah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ with regard to friendship with, and proximity to Allāh ﷻ. In the *Aḥādīth* mention is made of the *Sahābah's* sins and their punishment in this world. The punishment in the grave and in the Hereafter is also mentioned. The *auliyā' Allāh* are embodiments of obedience and worship. It is as though they do not even know how to sin or disobey [Allāh ﷻ]. If we examine their lives and biographies, we see nothing apart from expositions (*kashf*), miracles (*karāmāt*) and total engrossment [in Allāh ﷻ] to the extent of not turning their attention to this world at all. Allāh ﷻ says with regard to them:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Listen! There is no cause for fear on the *auliyā' of Allāh*, nor will they grieve."

Based on the above, I am experiencing many incorrect thoughts and whisperings. I hope you can explain this to me and remove my doubts.

Answer:

The Sahābah ﷺ of Rasūlullāh ﷺ were *auliyā'* of the highest level. The highest level of *walī* who came after the (time of the) Sahābah ﷺ could never equal a Sahābī ﷺ of the lowest level. Despite his lofty level, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* says:

"People consider Hadrat Mu'āwiyah ﷺ to be a low person and level numerous accusations against him. However, he is of an extremely lofty status and if the dust from the hoof of his horse were to fall in my eye, it would most certainly be my salvation and honour."

The masses consider *wilāyat* (being a *walī*) to mean "*kashf*, *karāmat* and remaining in solitude". This is incorrect. *Wilāyat* refers to *maqbuliyyat wa ittibā'* – acceptance in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ and emulating the Sunnah. The various spiritual exercises and meditations which have been formulated are with the purpose of acquiring a whiff of the excellent character and mannerisms which the Sahābah ﷺ possessed. In short, the lowest Sahābī ﷺ is superior to the highest *walī* who came after the Sahābah ﷺ.

As for the punishment which you have mentioned ... how can the *auliyā'* – as per the definition of the masses – be excluded from this? They are all the servants of Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, himself, constantly feared the punishment of Allāh. This punishment is similar to a goldsmith placing gold and silver over the fire in order to clean and purify it. If the *auliyā'* commit a sin and do not repent over it, they will be cleaned and purified in this way. Apart from the *ma'sūm* Prophets ﷺ, no one is free from sin, nor are they free from punishment. It is possible for the *auliyā'* to commit minor sins, major sins and even *kufr*. If they are bestowed with the inspiration to repent, they can become *auliyā'* once again. There is nothing reprehensible about this.

The belief of the masses that the *auliyā'* do not ever commit sins is absolutely incorrect. You must repent from this. The verse which

you quoted applies firstly to the Sahābah ﷺ and then to the *auliyā'* who came after them. No one is free from sin. The genuine *wilāyat* which we are talking about was found thousands of times more amongst the Sahābah ﷺ. *Kashf* and *karāmat* is not *wilāyat*.

That is all. Was *salām*.

'Abdullāh Shāh has been ill for quite some time. He conveys *salām*. If this issue of *wilāyat* is explained verbally to you, you will understand it properly. (1) First of all, it is essential to know what *wilāyat* means. (2) Secondly, we have to know what the essence of *nisbat* is. (3) Thirdly, the purpose of acquiring *nisbat* has to be learnt, and (4) lastly we have to investigate the condition of the Sahābah ﷺ. Full understanding of this issue is based on these four points. That is all.

Was *salām*.

Question 34

What is the meaning of the *ruh* (spirit) descending on Laylatul Qadr? In which hour is worship considered to be better than a thousand months?

Answer:

The angels, together with Jibra'il ﷺ, descend on Laylatul Qadr and blessings are experienced. However, this is only witnessed by the *ahl-e-bāṭin* (the special servants of Allāh ﷻ) and not by the masses. The reward for engaging in worship throughout the night is better than a thousand months. If a person engages in worship for a shorter period, the reward will be decreased accordingly. If a person remains awake for one hour and engages in worship during this one hour, he will receive the reward of one twelfth of the night.

That is all.

Question 35

Is it permissible to reply to the *adhān* if it is called while one is reciting the Qur'ān?

Answer:

If a person is reciting the Qur'ān and the *adhān* commences, it is better for him to remain silent and reply to the *adhān*. However, there is nothing wrong if he should continue reciting.

Question 36

What is the ruling of the Sharī'ah with regard to eating the food of a *fāsiq* Muslim, or a *kāfir* Hindu or Christian? May one accept the invitation of a lawyer or government employee?

Answer:

If a person's earning is *halāl*, it is considered *halāl* to eat at his house even if he is a *kāfir*, an irreligious person, a *fāsiq* or a *fājir*. If a person's income is *harām*, it is *harām* to eat at his house – no matter how pious he may be. The income of a lawyer is *harām* and the income of some government employees is *harām*, while there are some amongst them who earn a permissible income. If one is in doubt, one must make inquiries. If a person earns his income from both *halāl* and *harām* sources, it will be better to make inquiries. If not, one must act according to one's inclination.

Question 37

Is it permissible to make *istinjā'* (cleaning your private parts after relieving yourself) with left over *wudū'* water, or to perform *wudū'* with left over *istinjā'* water?

Answer:

It is permissible to do both, there is no reprehensibility (*karāhat*) in doing either of the two and there is also no special reward for it.

Question 38

If a *mu'takif* (person performing *i'tikāf*) is summoned to court, can he go?

Answer:

A *mu'takif* should not leave his *i'tikāf* unnecessarily. It is permissible for him to leave if it is necessary. To be summoned to court is also a necessity. If a *mu'takif* in Sunnah or *nafl i'tikāf* is summoned, he must go and return to his *i'tikāf*. If it is a *wājib i'tikāf*, he will have to repeat it.

Question 39

A child who has reached the age of understanding has memorized the Qur'ān and is leading the people in *tarāwīh salāh* during Ramadān. Is the *salāh* behind him valid?

Answer:

Tarāwīh salāh behind a boy who has not reached the age of puberty is not permissible. As long as signs of puberty are not found on him, or he is not fifteen years of age, he is classified as *nā bāligh* (immature and a minor).

Question 40

If a woman passes away during her menstruation, how should she be prompted to read the *kalimah*? If a husband, due to his negligence, did not pay his wife her dowry, should he get her to pardon him at the time of her death? If she passes away without pardoning him, is the dowry *wājib* upon the husband who is poor?

Answer:

Apart from the Qur'ān, a menstruating woman, a woman in post-natal bleeding (*nifās*) and a person in major impurity (*janābat*) are permitted to read the *kalimah*, *durūd*, *istighfār* etc.

If a woman passes away without having been paid her dowry, it must be given to her heirs according to their respective shares, or her heirs must be requested to waive it. If a woman does not want to waive her dowry, she cannot be forced to waive it. She has the right either to relinquish it, or not to relinquish it. The husband's

inability to pay does not absolve him of its payment. He must pay it once he has the funds.

Question 41

When is a woman classified *bāligh* (mature, having reached puberty)? If the husband of a *nā bāligh* (immature) girl passes away, does she have to observe 'iddah? If such a girl is married to another husband a few days after the death of her first husband, is this new marriage valid?

Answer:

A woman is classified *bāligh* when any of the signs of puberty are found in her e.g. pregnancy or menstruation. The 'iddah is *wājib* upon a *nā bāligh* girl as well. Any marriage which was performed before the girl observed her 'iddah is considered invalid. The one who enters into such a marriage, as well as those who attend such a marriage despite knowing its prohibition, are classified as *fussāq* (plural of *fāsiq*). The marriage must be re-performed after the 'iddah. If not, the conjugal relations which takes place between the two will be considered as *zinā* (adultery).

Question 42

What should be done to a Qur'ān which has become tattered and torn? Is it permissible for a person to take a water can or straw mat from the Musjid under the assumption that it belongs to Allāh ﷻ?

Answer:

If a Qur'ān becomes tattered and torn [and is no longer usable], it must be buried in a safe place. A person who takes anything which belongs to the Musjid will be sinning. It is *wājib* upon him to pay compensation for the item. Compensation must be given to the trustee of the Musjid.

Question 43

Is it permissible to enter into a partnership by giving money to a

person, asking him to do the work and the two will share profits and losses on a 50/50 basis?

Answer:

It is permissible to give money to a person and make him a partner in the profits on the basis of *mudārabat*, but the losses will have to be borne by the partner who provided the money. It is invalid to make the worker a partner in this. The profits may be divided on a 50/50 basis, less than this, or more, but the worker cannot be a partner in the losses.

Question 44

If the kid of a goat drinks the milk of a pig, will the meat of this young goat be *halāl* after it is slaughtered?

Answer:

If the kid of a goat was fed pig's milk and then – after its period of feeding, or a few days later – it stopped drinking the pig's milk and ate other foods, there will be no harm in eating its meat. If it is still drinking the pig's milk and confines itself only to this, it must be fed some other food for fifteen days. Only then may it be slaughtered and consumed.

Question 45

Is it permissible for women to wear jewellery that is made of German silver – which is quite common these days? May they wear imitation gold or silver lace?

Answer:

Jewellery made of gold, silver, glass, copper and brass are all permissible for women to wear. German silver will also be permissible. They may wear imitation gold or silver lace.

Question 46

Is it permissible for a Muslim barber to shave off a Hindu's beard?

Is it permissible to remove the hair on the cheeks? If a person performs eight *rak'ats* of *ṣalāh* during the last part of the nights of *Ramādān*, is it still *sunnat-e-mu'akkadah* for him to perform *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* during the first part of the night?

Answer:

It is not permissible to shave off any Muslim or non-Muslim's beard, nor is it permissible to accept any payment for this. It is preferable not to shave the area above the beard but it is permissible to do so. It is not permissible to shave the tuft of hair which grows beneath the lower lip.

The *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* is separate from the *tahajjud ṣalāh*. Performing *tahajjud* will not absolve one from performing *tarāwīḥ*.

Question 47

A person enters a *Musjid* when two *rak'ats* of the congregational *ṣalāh* have already been performed. He has a hope of getting *takbīr-e-ūlā* (the first *takbīr* marking the commencement of *ṣalāh*) in another *Musjid*. Is it permissible for him to (leave that *Musjid* and) go to the other *Musjid*?

Answer:

If the congregation is in progress in one *Musjid*, it is not permissible to go to another *Musjid* in the hope of getting the full congregation there.

Question 48

If one *sūrah* is repeated two or three times in a *rak'at* of *nafl ṣalāh*, will the *ṣalāh* become *makrūh*? If one is performing *Sunnah ṣalāh* and forgets to specify that it is *ishrāq* or *chāsht*, will it be valid?

Answer:

There is no *karāhat* (reprehensibility) in repeating one *sūrah* in the same *rak'at* of *nafl ṣalāh*. A general intention of *ṣalāh* is sufficient

for any *nafl* ṣalāh. It is not essential to specify *ishrāq* or *chāshī*, nor is it necessary to say: "I am performing this ṣalāh facing the qiblah." It is sufficient to merely have the intention of performing ṣalāh (in one's heart). However, it is necessary to specify the ṣalāh and time for every *fard* ṣalāh.

Question 49

The congregational ṣalāh was already completed in a Musjid. A few people who are generally regular in performing their ṣalāh with the congregation could not join it for some reason or the other. Should they make their own congregation?

Answer:

Once the congregation in a residential Musjid is over, it is not permissible to form another congregation. A second congregation is only permissible in a Musjid which is situated on the main road [where people are constantly coming and going] and where no specific imām or *muṣallīs* attend.

Question 50

Is it permissible for a person to marry his own daughter-in-law or his wife's daughter-in-law after his son or wife's son divorces her or passes away?

Answer:

The father cannot marry his son's wife. She is eternally *ḥarām* to him. However, if the son is not his own biological son – for instance, if it is his wife's son from a previous marriage – then he may marry his step-son's wife.



The above are examples of the prophetic bestowal which is known as the Pure Sharī'ah, which every human being is compelled to follow.

Al-hamdulillāh, I now conclude the section which portrayed the manifestation of the true prophetic deputyship of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī Muḥaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.

After relating a few historical events, my intention is to display the balanced path of Quṭb al-‘Ālam’s [Imām Rabbānī] which is known as the essence of the Sharī‘ah and referred to by the terms *tarīqah*, *sulūk*, *ma‘rifah* and *islāh-e-nafs*.

In the above section, I tried to present the hand-written writings of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. The misgivings, juristic matters, *fatāwā* and correspondence which were personally written by him were presented to the reader. Only in a few rare instances, where his dictations were written on his behalf by his reliable scribe and special *khādim* (attendant), were they also included. The above were selected from his personal writings. If we were to quote all his academic writings and statements, we would fill a voluminous book. If Allāh ﷻ enables us, we will, *inshā Allāh*, undertake this task in future as well.

FAMOUS STUDENTS OF HADRAT GANGOHĪ

Allāh ﷻ sent Muḥaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh* as an imām who could combine the Sharī‘ah and *Tarīqah*. Thus, both these aspects of *Dīn* became the salient qualities of his life. He acquired both these lights from the lamp of Prophethood and they proved to be sufficient to illuminate the vast land of India. *Inshā Allāh*, their light will continue to illuminate the people who are in the darkness of ignorance and guide them towards understanding.

He produced more than three hundred ‘*ulamā*’ – many of whom spread to different parts of the world and are still occupied in the spreading of *Dīn* and the dissemination of knowledge.

Following are a few of his famous students:

(1) Abū al-Anwār Maulwī ‘Abd al-Ghaffār Sāhib,

- (2) Maulwī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib, who was the son of Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Faqīr Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*,
- (3) Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Ganjwī,
- (4) Hakīm Maulwī Jamīl ad-Dīn Sāhib Nagīnwī,
- (5) Maulwī Husayn Sharīf Sāhib Wilāyatī,
- (6) Maulwī Hakīm Naṣīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Meerutī Marhūm,
- (7) Maulwī Aḥmad Shāh Sāhib Hasanpūrī,
- (8) Maulwī Hakīm Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, also known as Hayāt 'Alī Mathrāwī,
- (9) Maulwī Amānullāh Kashmīrī,
- (10) Maulwī 'Abd al-Karīm Punjābī,
- (11) Maulwī Maḥmūd Husayn Barelwī,
- (12) Hakīm 'Abd al-'Azīz Marhūm, resident of Gilautī,
- (13) Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Khān, resident of Gaddhī,
- (14) Hakīm Maulwī Siddīq Aḥmad, resident of Gaddhī,
- (15) Hakīm 'Abd al-Wahhāb, a blind person presently residing in Hyderabad Decca,
- (16) Maulwī Imām ad-Dīn Marhūm, resident of Gumtalah,
- (17) Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Mānakpūrī,
- (18) Maulwī Ma'shūq 'Alī Paurabī,
- (19) Mullā Muḥammad Jī Bukhārī,
- (20) Maulwī Sifāt Aḥmad Ghāzīpūrī,
- (21) Maulwī Minhāj ad-Dīn Hazārwi⁴⁴,
- (22) Maulānā Hāmid Hasan Deobandī,
- (23) Maulānā Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib Murādābādī. He was invited to the Islamic government of Bhopal by the ruler's wife, who greatly appreciated knowledge. He was employed by her for a salary of a hundred rupees per month and was appointed as a tutor to her youngest son. At present he is the principal of Madrasah Waqfiyyah 'Arabīyyah. He is Hadrat's special student, old and faithful *khādim* and also his *mujāz* for the acceptance of *bay'ah*.
- (23) Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī. He acquired both *ẓāhirī* and *bā'inī* knowledge from

⁴⁴ He is from Kawt Najibullāh, district Hazārāh.

Hadrat and is his *mujāz-e-Tarīqah*.

(24) Maulānā Maulwī Qādir 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was also Hadrat's student and *mujāz-e-Tarīqah*. He was a teacher at a madrasah in Delhi and was enumerated among the famous '*ulamā*'. He was fully embellished with *bāṭinī* knowledge.

(25) Maulwī Sa'dullāh Sāhib also studied at the Gangohī threshold. He is presently a judge in Srinagar, Kashmir.

(26) Maulwī Mājīd 'Alī Sāhib Jaunpūrī also studied under Hadrat. He is presently the teacher in charge at Meindo.

(27) Maulwī Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī. He is *mujāz-e-Tarīqah* and is presently an honoured guest of a sincere businessman in Delhi. He receives a salary of twenty rupees.

(28) Maulwī Hakīm Aḥmad Sāhib Rāmpūrī and

(29) Janāb Maulwī Sa'd ad-Dīn Sāhib Rāmpūrī who are presently consultative principals in Bhopal.

(30) Maulwī Radī al-Ḥasan Kāndhlawī.

(31) Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib Karsauwī Marḥūm. He was a student of Hadrat and his *mujāz-e-Tarīqah khalīfah*. He passed away three years ago in Makkah Mu'azzamah in Muḥarram al-Ḥarām after performing ḥajj.

(32) Hāfiz Amīr Hasan Gangohī.

(33) Maulwī Mūmin 'Alī Gangohī.

(34) Maulwī Fakhr al-Ḥasan Sāhib Gangohī.

(35) Pīr Jīyo 'Abd ar-Razzāq Gangohī.

(36) Maulwī Nadhīr Aḥmad Ambhetwī *rahimahullāh*.⁴⁵

(37) Maulwī Allāh Rakhe Ambhetwī.

(38) Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Karnālī.

(39) Maulānā Fath Muḥammad Thānwī.

(40) Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib Sādhaurwī.

(41) Maulwī Amīr Hasan Sāhib Ambhetwī also studied under Hadrat.

⁴⁵ He was Hadrat Maulānā Khālīl Aḥmad Sāhib's brother. He passed away two years ago in Makkah Mu'azzamah and is buried in Jannatul Mu'allā. May Allāh ﷻ shower him with His Mercy. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

(42) Hadrat's two sons, Janāb Maulānā al-Maulwī Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib and Maulānā al-Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad Marhūm also studied under him.

(43) Hadrat's son-in-law, Maulānā Hāfiz Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib.

(44) Hāfiz Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib who was a sāhib-e-nisbat (enjoyed close proximity to Allāh ﷻ) and passed away in Gangoh.

(45) Hadrat's nephews [sister's sons], Maulwī Altāf ar-Rahmān Marhūm and

(46) Maulwī Lutf ar-Rahmān Sāhib.

(47) Hadrat's wife's nephew, Maulwī Abū at-Tayyib ibn Abū al-Qāsim ibn Maulwī Muḥammad Naqī Sāhib, also studied under him.

(48) Hakīm Ismā'il Sāhib Gangohī.

(49) Mullā 'Abd ar-Razzāq Sāhib who is presently the principal judge in the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul.

(50) Maulānā Hakīm Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib.

(51) Maulānā Hāfiz Ahmad Sāhib. He is the principal of Madrasah Islāmīyyah Deoband.

(52) Maulwī Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib Deobandī also had the honour of studying under Hadrat.

(53) And finally, the person who studied in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's final *daurah* class and who is most probably known to all – seniors and juniors – who are affiliated to Hadrat, Maulānā al-Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī. During this final year of Hadrat's teaching *daurah*, Hadrat became blind and was therefore unable to personally write replies to the various questions and letters which were sent to him. This student [Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib] was selected for this service.⁴⁶ His natural

⁴⁶ His father, Hadrat Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'il ibn Husayn Bakhsh Jhanjānwī was a very pious, cautious and well-known Shaykh. A major portion of his life was spent studying under Mirzā Ilāhī Bakhsh, the son of Mirzā Sulaymān Jāh. The delight of his eyes, Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā, studied the different Islamic sciences and other branches of knowledge in Delhi. He came to Gangoh in Shawwāl

intelligence, perception, juristic acumen, capability, constant service to the Shaykh and full understanding of the Shaykh's temperament caused him to remain in the constant company of the Shaykh for a period of twelve years. It would have been sufficient for me to merely present maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib as an example to display the effects of Hadrat's academic contribution and juristic acumen. There was no need to list over fifty people from this vast ocean of Hadrat's numerous students.

Allow me to give you a glimpse of the *Seh Darī* – the garden of *Dīn* whose fragrance numerous '*ulamā*' had inhaled. I present this picture – not only for the sake of the reader, but specifically for Hadrat's students:

How sad! This garden of knowledge which the gardener had left behind when he departed from this world, now stands deserted. The house is still in the same condition as it was when it was used for

1312 A.H. and stayed in Lāl Musjid. Hadrat started the *daurah* lessons in that year specifically for his sake. Hadrat suffered numerous tragedies which weakened him greatly and left him without any strength to teach. He also remained ill for a few months during the course of the *daurah*. The *Sihāh* were therefore completed over a period of two years. Hadrat asked for an article to be written on the prohibition of usury (*ribā*) because it had become quite common in those days. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib presented fully-referenced juristic statements and embellished the article in an academic way. Hadrat was greatly pleased by it and said to him: "*Bārakallāh.*" (may Allāh ﷻ Bless you). After saying this, Hadrat handed over his seal/stamp to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib and it remained with him till the very end. The responsibility of issuing *fatāwā* was handed over to him and, that too, with such confidence in him that, apart from certain complicated rulings which Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib consulted Hadrat on as a precaution, the other thousands of rulings which were sent from all over the world were written by him without Hadrat even asking him what he wrote, or asking him to read the reply to him. May Allāh ﷻ bless him in his life and knowledge. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

the purpose of teaching, but the one who had inhabited it is no longer there. The one from whose breath every brick used to be showered with light and vitality is gone. The straw mat is still laid out in the courtyard of the *khānqāh*, the bed is neatly made, the pure turban is lying near the pillow, the walking stick is standing near the head-side of the bed, the blessed shoes are placed under the trunk, the sandals are placed at the centre wall, stools are lying around on all sides, a bench is placed towards the qiblah, a *musallā* (salāh mat) is laid out on it and a water jug for *wuḍū'* is placed next to it. This is where the *ishrāq salāh* used to be performed and where *Hadrat* used to spend his nights.

How heartbreaking! The garden has been uprooted, the birds have flown away, the lushness of the garden has disappeared, the flowers and buds are all gone, the crowing roosters and the chirping and singing birds have all departed.

I have tried to describe each thing as it is today [at the time of writing this book]. The *Seh Darī* was that classroom which had a strong bond with the sciences of the Sharī'ah.

May Allāh ﷻ grant success to *Hājī Ahmad Mirzā* – the artist who fulfilled my request and provided his services to *Hadrat* through his art.

REMAINING INCIDENTS AND THE FARD HAJJ

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's daughter, *Safīyyah Khātūn* – the mother of *Hāfiz Muḥammad Ya'qūb* – was born in Rabī 'ath-Thānī 1274 A.H. – one year after the mutiny. A son was born one year prior to her birth, but he passed away within a few days after his birth. From amongst his children, this was the first treasure which Allāh ﷻ had sent forth in his favour for the everlasting Hereafter. *Imām Rabbānī* had given preference to *Dīn* over this world and Allāh ﷻ had tested

him – causing him to experience difficulties which were beyond his control. His success in passing these tests was made manifest when his beloved child became the first fruit and treasure for him in the Hereafter.

On Friday, 14 Jumādā ath-Thānīyah 1278 A.H. his son, Janāb Maulānā Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib was born. His daughter was four years and two months old at the time. Thereafter, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had another daughter named Umm Hānī, but she passed away when she was three or four years old.

No sooner did his daughter reach the age of understanding, when she showed signs of a natural inclination towards worship and a desire for obedience to Allāh ﷻ. This was a natural consequence of the constant remembrance of Allāh ﷻ which took place in every corner of their house. Apart from *Dīnī* occupations and seeking the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, what else was there to be found in Imām Rabbānī's home towards which a child could feel inclined? If there was any 'play' – it was *ṣalāh*. If there was any occupation, it was to remain pure and to study and learn. When she learnt to speak, she was taught to say Allāh's Name. When she progressed in speaking, she was taught the *kalimah tayyibah* – *Lā ilāha illallāhu Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh*. His daughter's first teacher – her mother – was a *waliyah* (female *walī*) herself. There was no need for her to formally tutor her daughter because every act of hers was in accordance with the Sunnah and the pure Sharī'ah. She completed reading the entire Qur'ān under her mother's tutelage and expressed her desire to study the meaning of the Qur'ān to her father.

This came at the time when Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had opened the doors to teaching and he used to remain occupied in teaching students from early morning until twelve noon. When he arrived home for lunch, his wife would read one and a quarter *pārās/juz* of the Qur'ān to him. This was a daily practice. Hadrat commenced teaching the meaning of the Qur'ān to his daughter during this time

and laid the foundation for simple *Dīnī* education in the house. When he started these lessons with his daughter, a few of his relatives' daughters also joined in this delightful bounty. Hadrat would provide a simple translation of the Qur'ānic verses and teach them the essentials of *Dīn* at the same time. He would teach them the rules and regulations, encourage them towards following the Sharī'ah, warn them against disobeying Allāh ﷻ and emphasize sound morals and etiquette. These lessons to the women used to take about half an hour and in this way, Imām Rabbānī fulfilled the responsibility of rectifying and reforming the women – a duty which Allāh ﷻ has imposed on every man and woman.

Due to his many preoccupations, Hadrat would only remain in his house for short periods, but whatever time he spent with his family, he would spend it in their reformation and spiritual progress. He would monitor their movements, watch their dress and appearance and their ways of speaking and remaining silent. In short, he considered it essential to monitor every aspect of their lives. If, during these short stays, any woman would come to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands, he would initiate her and teach her the *tasbīhāt* (different methods of glorifying Allāh ﷻ). Love for *ṣalāh* had crept into every vein of his body and thus, he desired that his family members and all his associates should also become totally attached to it, to the extent where they would be conscious of it and concerned about it, even if they were to be in the throes of death. In short, whatever he wanted to teach the women, he did it during these Qur'ān translation classes. Apart from his unique daughter acquiring knowledge regarding the essentials of *Dīn*, she also learnt the subject matter of the Qur'ān and, in this way, she gained the ability to deliver talks as and when needed.

Three years had passed since Hadrat was accused of mutineering and freed from imprisonment. It was the fourth year since he was separated from his Shaykh, A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. The Allāh-bestowed love which he had for his

Shaykh and which was embedded in his heart increased by the day. Although his heart was occupied in teaching and his nights and days were spent in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, his yearning to meet his Shaykh and to visit the Haram left him restless. It was a difficult time for him and Allāh ﷻ was putting him through the test of poverty. After leaving his employment in Sahāranpūr, he did not take up any other position. He started a business, selling books for a few months, but it was only temporary and could not continue in a small place like Gangoh. Thus, he alone knew the dire circumstances in which he found himself.

The doors which were opened to him during the last ten to twelve years of his life could never have been envisaged during his early days. He was to become wealthy, but before this affluence, he was blessed with the unintended Sunnah of poverty and dire circumstances. Allāh ﷻ enabled him to accomplish the prophetic deputyship in this regard as well:

"Did He not find you an orphan, and gave you shelter? And found you wandering, and showed you the way? And found you in need, and made you self-sufficient?"

(Sūrah ad-Duhā, 93: 6-8)

During the days of poverty his heart was filled with the immovable wealth of intense love for Allāh ﷻ. He was therefore happy and pleased with his condition. He was greatly attracted to his ascetic life. He did not want anyone to see the tattered condition of his clothes. It was a time when he disliked the arrival of any guest because he was unable to host him and, at the same time, he did not want his dire situation to become known to the guest. If any traveller stopped over at his place, he would become restless. His heart-felt desire was to remain in the anonymous and unknown condition in which he was and he did not want anyone to see or hear about his condition.

Under such difficult and dire circumstances, the desire and yearning to meet his Shaykh was increasing daily. This yearning could only be fulfilled through boarding a ship and bearing the difficulties of crossing the Indian Ocean – a journey which lasted six months. His yearning had reached such a level that, if he had wings, he would have flown to the Hijāz. However, his poverty had reached such a point that it was difficult for him to leave his house and move about.

Look at the Power and Might of Allāh ﷻ. Deputy 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib Marhūm Rāmpūrī had made a firm intention of going for hajj and this big-hearted person wanted to take a large group of his friends and associates with him. I have heard that even his barber and the washer-man who used to wash his clothes had asked him to take them with him. The Deputy Sāhib gladly acceded to their request and took them all with him. It was also the Deputy Sāhib desire to take Hadrat Hakīm Diya'ad-Dīn Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib with him. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī accepted the offer gladly and thanked Allāh ﷻ for this hidden assistance.

Hakīm Diya'ad-Dīn Sāhib Rāmpūrī *rahimahullāh* was the *khalīfah* of Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*. Imām Rabbānī had had great affinity and love for Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Because of this, he shared a very friendly and informal relationship with Hakīm Diya'ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. It is difficult to find another example of the type of friendship which existed between these two men in Hadrat's life. Whenever Hakīm Sāhib used to visit Hadrat, he would sit or lie down on Hadrat's bed, perform *wudū'* at Hadrat's *wudū' khānā* and perform his *nafl salāh* there. Very often Hakīm Sāhib would lie down on Hadrat's bed, while Hadrat would sit in line with him on the floor and they would continue talking to one another. Hadrat had immense respect for Hakīm Sāhib – something which is difficult to understand in the light of their informal relationship. The respect

and honour which Imām Rabbānī accorded to him is unequalled among Hadrat's general associates.

On one occasion Hakīm Sāhib came to know that Imām Rabbānī had become displeased with him over a certain matter. The moment he heard about this, he was overcome with grief and he left Rāmpūr immediately, on foot, and proceeded directly towards Gangoh. Upon reaching the *khānqāh*, he did not have the courage to go directly to Hadrat and to speak to him face to face. After the *zuhr salāh* had been performed, Imām Rabbānī - as per his usual habit - proceeded to his private room to engage in the recitation of the Qur'ān and closed the door. Hakīm Sāhib proceeded to the thatched-roof section at the southern and eastern sections of the Musjid, sat down and started crying until his tears had formed a line on his cheeks. When Hadrat's special attendant (*khādim-e-khās*), 'Abdullāh Shāh Marhūm, saw Hadrat's informal and devoted friend in this troubled condition, he was astounded. He went to him, offered *salām* to him and asked him the reason for his crying. Hakīm Sāhib continued crying and said: "If it is possible, go to Hadrat and inform him that I have come to seek forgiveness for my mistake."

The *khādim* went to Hadrat and said: "Hadrat, I have something essential to tell you. Please stop your recitation and listen to what I have to say. Janāb Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib is sitting in a very worried state under the thatched-roof. People are surprised at seeing him in such a condition and they are feeling sorry for him. He conveys this message: 'I have come to seek forgiveness for my mistake.'"

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī got up immediately, went outside and embraced Hakīm Sāhib. He continued crying for some time and, after all matters were cleared, they became the same old informal friends once again.

Hadrat saw that his wish of meeting his Shaykh in Makkah and his affectionate teacher, Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib in Madīnah, would soon be realized. In addition to this, he was to experience the company and companionship of Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib. He was therefore extremely happy to accompany Deputy Sāhib to Hijāz, made preparations for the journey and arrangements for his wife and family who would be remaining at home. At the beginning of 1280 A.H. he departed with the Rāmpūrī caravan and proceeded towards Karachi.

When Hadrat's maternal cousin and childhood friend, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib, saw Hadrat making preparations for the hajj journey, he became restless. Although Hadrat tried to stop him, he presented the excuse that he would not be able to bear the separation from Hadrat. He sold whatever belongings he possessed, loaded provisions for the journey onto a cart and, together with his wife, they joined the caravan.

In short, Hadrat's entire expenses were borne by Deputy Sāhib, but Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib, who was prepared to sacrifice himself to accompany Hadrat, joined him at his own expense. This caravan consisted of people like Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib, Hāfiz Wahīd ad-Dīn Sāhib – who is the father of Maulwī Sa'īd ad-Dīn Sāhib from Bhopal – Hājī 'Alā' ad-Dīn Sāhib, Hājī Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib, and the entire family and all the associates of Deputy 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib.

The hajj journey during those days was not like that of today. At present, a person leaves his house, sits on a train, and within three days he reaches Bombay. There he boards a steam-ship and, within twelve days, he enters the harbour of Jeddah.⁴⁷ If we had to compare the ease and comfort of today, to the difficulties and

⁴⁷ The author is describing the hajj journey, as experienced at the time of writing this book.

hardships of those days, there would be a vast difference between the two. One would consider the obligation of hajj to be the most difficult of all acts of worship. People had to sit for weeks upon weeks on carts and ox-wagons – the vibrations of which would go right through one's bones. Then they had to travel across water for months. The river journeys were covered in boats known as *baghlahs*. About thirty to forty passengers would sit in a *baghlah*. The moist winds would cause them to feel dizzy and they would be tossed to and fro, falling upon each other. If they stood up, they would become light-headed. This would cause them to fall down unconscious. These *baghlahs* were small sailboats which were driven by the winds and controlled by a person known as a *mallāh* (a sailor). He would sail throughout the day and in the evening he would set anchor near an inhabited area. The dizzy passengers would get up and prepare a broth of herbs and grains to eat. If they found the time, they would remove the entire day's fatigue by sleeping for a while. If not, they would lie down and continue staring at the sky. The anchor would be raised in the crisp morning air – slightly before dawn. The harbour would be close by and they would get a chance to set foot on land.

The journey by sail ship would then commence from Karachi. The sail ship generally left with goods from Bombay harbour [stopped over at Karachi] and continued its journey – making stops at Aden, Maklā, San'ā', Hukhah and other ports of Yemen, where goods would be loaded and off-loaded. It would eventually reach Jeddah. The ship's movement was dependent on its strong sails and the blowing of the winds. It therefore took long to cover the journey. If the wind changed direction, the ship also changed direction. I had heard of incidents where ships continued moving until they could see the shores of Jeddah, when the winds suddenly changed, causing the ships to move backwards until they reached the shores of Bombay. Only those poor travellers, who had seen nothing but the water beneath them and the skies above them, would know the thoughts that went through their minds upon experiencing such

grievous moments.

At present – by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ – both land and sea travel has become very easy through the use of steam power. It has become difficult for us to even understand the hardships of the past. It used to take the sail ships about three to four months to travel from India to Jeddah. However, if Divine Assistance was with them, they were able to cover the distance even quicker than steamboats and the strong winds would convey even the largest of ships to Jeddah within seven days.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had the occasion of undertaking his first hajj journey – also known as the *fard hajj* – during these difficult times of travel and in the company of the Rāmpūrī caravan. He travelled by cart-wagon until he reached Fīrauzpūr. From there he proceeded via the *baghlahs* (small sailboats) passing beneath Bhāwalpūr, until he reached Hyderabad Sindh. There he boarded another *baghlah* which took him to Karachi, and from Karachi on to Bombay. Through considering all its difficulties to be comforts, his weak and frail body was able to bear this tiresome journey. He did not allow himself to miss a single ṣalāh during this entire journey. He remained engaged in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ – just as he used to do when he was at home. The difficulties of travelling which normally annoy people, did not affect him in any way. He remained smiling and happy during every setback – just as one would be when experiencing success. He knew that every hardship and difficulty was from Allāh ﷻ and therefore he would not allow himself to express any discontent.

The ship eventually arrived, the fare was agreed upon, everyone purchased their tickets and they finally boarded. The passengers were anxiously waiting for the anchor to be raised, but by sunset it had still not been raised. It is not easy to bear the inconvenience of waiting. The departure was delayed to such an extent that everyone felt overcome with distress because they did not know when the

anchor would be raised and when they would depart. Several days passed in this way and the people's anxiety increased. They became tired of sitting for so many days at the harbour. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī saw the condition of his fellow passengers, he said: "Miyā, why are you becoming distressed? The ship will depart on the fourth day."

On the fourth day all the passengers anxiously waited to see whether they would depart or not. When, after half the day had passed, they saw no sign of any departure, they became restless and said to Hadrat: "Today is the fourth day and we have not departed as yet." A short while later the captain raised the anchor and the words: "*Bismillāhi majrehā wa mursāhā ...*" echoed through the ship.

When the small boat (*baghlah*) left Karachi and headed towards Bombay, they suddenly saw thick clouds approaching. The clouds hovered above the boat and heavy rain started pouring down. The strong wind shook the boat and gave motion to the cold water. The waves started crashing against the boat and a severe storm engulfed the passengers who had, up until now, been sitting peacefully.

Initially the captain managed to control the sails under the pressure of the wind, but when the boat's safety went beyond his control, he lost hope, became tired, and said: "Hājīs, make *du'ā'*, we are in the midst of a storm."

The mere mention of a storm strikes terror in the hearts of most people. We cannot even imagine the anxiety of those who are caught in a storm at sea. When the waves of the sea swell like mountains and the boat is tossed to and fro, even brave and courageous people become petrified. The flash of lightning and the roar of thunder are the preludes to such a storm – and drowning in such bitter and salty water is the inevitable result.

What can be said about the fate of a *baghlah* under such conditions? No sooner had the storm struck when the passengers and the sailors lost all hope. Some passengers were crying, others were shouting hysterically, a few were stunned, while the remainder were silent and confused. No matter where you turned your gaze – each one was distressed and fearful. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: “Bhāi, if anyone dies, we can do nothing. We were summoned by someone [Allāh ﷻ]. We are not going of our own accord.” Hadrat expressed these consoling words to his fellow travellers with absolute confidence, but it was difficult for others to acquire the Allāh-bestowed peace and tranquillity which he possessed. Hence, their trepidation did not end. Only three days later did the clouds start to dissipate. The wind subsided, the crashing waves lost their strength and the boat continued moving at its original pace.

When the boat returned to its original course, the *hājīs* felt at ease. The captain looked at the dial in order to ascertain where they were and how far they had been taken off-course. He was astonished when he looked at the dial and addressed his passengers saying: “The storm has proved to be a great friend. The boat has covered a distance which we would not have been able to cover in eight days of sailing in a gentle wind. It has followed a straight course in the storm and the fierce winds has enabled it to traverse a few days’ journey within a matter of a few hours.”

We had heard that, soon after the raging storm had come to an end, the passengers felt the effects of peace and tranquillity. It was during this time that – either in a dream or in a state of wakefulness – Hakīm Diyā’ad-Dīn Sāhib, or one of the other passengers, saw A’lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib in the stormy sea, on either side of the boat. They were carrying the boat on their shoulders, pushing it forward and protecting it against the crashing waves. While doing this, they were saying [to the passengers]: “Do not worry.” Allāh ﷻ thus transformed this

calamity into a worldly Mercy for them and made this storm a means through which they could cover a long distance in a short period of time. After having stopped over at several harbours along the way, the entire caravan eventually reached Jeddah safe and sound. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and all his companions mounted camels and proceeded towards Makkah Mu‘azzamah.

Apart from performing the hajj and ‘umrah in the Holy Haram, the bounties which Imām Rabbānī acquired from the companionship of his Shaykh, Murshid al-‘Arah wa al-‘Ajam A‘lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh are known to none but him. A‘lā Hadrat – in his joy upon seeing Imām Rabbānī – kept him with him constantly for as long as he remained in Makkah. When they were proceeding to ‘Arafāt for hajj, A‘lā Hadrat kept their camels together and in Minā and Muzdalifah he did the same.

While in Makkah Mu‘azzamah, he had a dream⁴⁸ in which he saw a group of *auliya*’ who looked like *abdāl*. They were walking and he was observing them. Hadrat used to relate: “While I was dreaming this, I made the *du‘ā*’ to Allāh ﷻ to include me amongst them. I made this *du‘ā*’, ran after them and caught up with them. I related this dream to A‘lā Hadrat the following morning. He smiled and said: ‘What more do you want? You have already joined them.’”

Hadrat had another dream while in Makkah Mu‘azzamah: Blood was flowing from four of his fingers. A lot of blood was flowing from two fingers, a little less from the third finger and even less from the fourth finger. He used to say: “I related this dream to Maulānā Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib Kāndhlawī and he interpreted it as follows: ‘All four of your *nisbats* (spiritual affiliations) will

⁴⁸ It is not known with certainty whether he had this dream while on his first hajj, or on the second or third hajj. However, he certainly had the dream while in Makkah Mu‘azzamah. (Maulwī Wilayat Husayn Giyāwī, Maulwī Muhammad Is-hāq Nahtaurī)

continue flowing, but two⁴⁹ will flow profusely.” After relating this, he said with absolute humility: “I am still waiting [for the realization of this dream]. If Maulwī Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib was alive, I would have told him: ‘You were the one who interpreted it, now you do something [so that I may see the reality of this dream].’”

During his stay in Makkah Mu‘azzamah, Hadrat noticed the effects of scabies on his body, increasing by the day.⁵⁰ The unending treasure, in quest of which he had left Gangoh and the joy which he was experiencing [in Makkah] did not permit him to pay any attention to his illness. It continued increasing and spreading. Upon the completion of hajj, the caravan started making preparations to depart for Madīnah via the royal route and Hadrat departed with his Rāmpūrī caravan for *Baldatur Rasūl* (the city of Rasūlullāh ﷺ).

The difficulties of a journey – especially those of a hajj journey – are the real trials and tribulations which differentiates between those Muslims who are sincere and those who are insincere. This is especially true when it comes to their journey to Madīnah. It is the essence of all journeys. During the course of travelling through the twelve stations, there are very few fellow travellers who do not engage in fights, disputes and arguments amongst one another. Showing concern for the well-being of others and giving preference

⁴⁹ They are most probably the Chishtīyyah and Naqshbandīyyah spiritual affiliations. Allāh ﷻ Alone has knowledge of the unseen.
(Maulānā Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī)

⁵⁰ On one occasion Hadrat related: “In India, any type of person is appointed as a *mu‘adhdhin*, but in Arabia a person with a loud and sweet voice is appointed.” He then spoke about a particular *mu‘adhdhin* saying: “He had a very beautiful voice. We were staying in the house which was beneath the *minārah* from which he used to call out the *adhān* and we used go walking about there. It was round about that time when scabies appeared on my body.” (Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn)

to the needs of others over one's own needs virtually depart from their temperaments. Each one is only concerned about himself and each traveller is only concerned about his own comfort. Hadrat's fortitude and sincerity was made manifest during every step of the journey and at every station. He considered the smallest need and slightest comfort of his companions to be the greatest and most essential need and he comforted every person in his need.

At the same time, he did not permit any change to creep into his personal optional *[nafl]* *ma'mūlāt*. At one point, Deputy 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was angered by something. He got off his camel and took an oath saying: "I am not going to sit on this camel." Those who have treaded this path are fully aware of the temperament and mood of the Bedouins.

When they start moving with their caravan, they could not be bothered about whether anyone is dying or not. Why would they bother about Deputy Sāhib who had already paid for hiring the camel and was now bent on walking? Consequently, the Bedouin untied Deputy Sāhib's camel from the main caravan and the camel separated itself from the group. Deputy Sāhib and his two companions were left behind and the caravan proceeded. The moment Hadrat saw Deputy Sāhib, he jumped off his camel, left the caravan and went to Deputy Sāhib. How could Imām Rabbānī's cousin, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr, bear to see his cousin separated from the caravan? He also separated his camel from the caravan and went to Hadrat. The main caravan had gone quite a distance and continued proceeding on its path. These few people were left at a dangerous place where highway robbers considered it a trivial thing to kill travellers by pelting them with rocks. Even if they wanted to proceed, how could they? Deputy Sāhib was refusing to get onto the camel because of the oath which he had taken and he did not have the strength to walk.

Hadrat Maulānā and the others could not proceed without Deputy

Sāhib. Maulwī Abū an-Nasr Sāhib eventually asked his wife to get off her camel and requested Deputy Sāhib to mount it, so that his oath would not be broken and they would at least be able to try to catch up with the main caravan. Deputy Sāhib, together with one of his companions, mounted the camel, and Maulwī Abū an-Nasr's wife was made to mount Deputy Sāhib's camel. Imām Rabbānī got some space to sit on the same camel and Maulwī Abū an-Nasr Sāhib and one other person proceeded on foot. They caught up with the main caravan after about six miles. The two camels were tied to the main caravan, Maulwī Abū an-Nasr mounted his original camel and Hadrat mounted his own.

Upon reaching Madīnah, Hadrat presented himself at the blessed grave (Raudah) of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – the hope and desire of every Muslim in this world. He then went to visit his affectionate teacher, Shaykh al-'Asr Sayyidunā wa Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib rahimahullāh. The full extent of the treasures [of blessings] which he had acquired during his few days' stay in Madīnah will never be known to anyone. While in Makkah, he had had the honour of being with his *Shaykh-e-Tarīqah* and while in Madīnah, he had the honour of being with his *Shaykh-e-Sharī'ah*.

In short, these two 'suns' – who were living in the neighbourhood of Baytullāh [Ka'bah] and Baytur Rasūl [Madīnah] – became the means through which Hadrat aquired spiritual progress. The time eventually arrived for the caravan to return and the date of departure was set. From this entire Rāmpūrī caravan, one person did not want to leave the pure ground of Jannatul Baqī'. Janāb Deputy 'Abd al-Haq Sāhib passed away in Madīnah and was blessed with the honour of enjoying Rasūlullāh's ﷺ close proximity until the Day of Resurrection. Imām Rabbānī and his fellow travellers returned to Makkah Mu'azzamah and then proceeded towards India.

It was the year 1281 A.H. and two months had passed since the

scabies started in Makkah Mu'azzamah. It continued spreading over his body. Initially it was a dry rash, but by this time it had become infected and was oozing. It was slight in the beginning, but had become quite frightening to behold. Hadrat boarded the ship in this condition. It seemed as though a match had been struck in dry straw because his fever increased drastically, to the extent where he would become delirious. He remained in this condition for three days – totally unaware of the world and of his own body. He suffered from severe diarrhoea, unable to count how often he had to endure this discomfort.

His companions had lost hope in his chances of survival, but his cousin, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib, continued to nurse him. The service which he rendered during this frightening illness, and the manner in which he nursed Hadrat, is well-known and will remain shining and highlighted for a long time in Hadrat's biography. On the basis of the Hadīth:

من لم يشكر الناس لم يشكر الله

"The one who does not show gratitude to people, cannot show gratitude to Allāh."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would very often be heard saying: "Even a blood brother cannot render services in the manner in which Abū an-Naṣr had served me."⁵¹ He used to carry me in his lap like an

⁵¹ On one occasion Hadrat said: "Had my brother [referring to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib] and sister-in-law not seen to me, there would be no sign of me." On another occasion he said: "There is no part of Abū an-Naṣr's body upon which my excreta did not fall." One of Hadrat's devoted *khādims*, who loved Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr dearly, asked Hadrat: "Hadrat, are you angry at Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr?" Hadrat replied: "Abū an-Naṣr is my mother. Can I ever be angry with him? The only thing is that he is stubborn, he considers himself to be correct in this matter, and is clinging stubbornly to his opinion." (Hāfiz

affectionate mother so that I could relieve myself." Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's clothes would constantly get soiled with the pus and blood which oozed out of the wounds, and he would very often be soiled with urine and excreta. However, daily he would diligently wash Ḥadrat's body and clothes, as well as his own, without any hesitance. It seemed as though he considered the excreta to be 'sandal wood' and the urine to be 'rose water'.

After three days Inām Rabbānī regained consciousness. He did not have the strength to even change his posture. When he passed urine on the fourth day, it was as red as blood. When he opened his eyes, they resembled pieces of red broad-cloth. We are not sure whether we should refer to this condition as 'consciousness' or 'unconsciousness', but he uttered these words: "How sad – I had a brother and I have lost him as well." Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib was seated with Ḥadrat's head upon his lap. He said: "Bhāi, I am seated here with you on my lap and here is your sister-in-law sitting in front of you." Ḥadrat replied: "I have to refer to you as my mother or as my father."

Ḥadrat's diarrhoea had been like liquid and the three duvets which had been placed beneath him had become soiled, one after the other. They could find nothing else to place underneath him. They had no option but to use his *iḥrām* – which he had wanted to take home as a *tabarruk* (source of blessings). The *iḥrām* sheets were alternated. When one became soiled, it would be washed and hung in the salty sea water, while the other clean sheet would be used. His urine had become extremely pungent, causing the soiled cloth to smell. They were travelling in a sailboat and not in a steamboat. For that reason they were unable to provide him with any form of medical treatment. Even if they wanted to – who would have done it, and how? They continued in this way until they saw the Bombay shoreline on the seventh day. The *ḥājīs* happily disembarked on

their native soil – India. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr undertook the pain and difficulty of carrying Hadrat off the ship and the Rāmpūrī caravan settled down in a rented house in Bombay.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's illness was very serious and any thoughts of his recovery were mere thoughts and assumptions. Upon reaching Bombay, he received medical treatment with full attention and earnestness, but his illness did not subside in the least. It only intensified by the minute. Initially his sincere and loyal friend, Janab Hakīm Ḍiyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib, treated him with Unānī medicines but, when he lost hope, another person by the name of 'Abdullāh Shāh Nizāmwī treated him. He gave him medicine for one day, but when the diarrhoea continued the following day, he suggested that they should obtain the services of another doctor.

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr was most concerned and spent his time either looking for another doctor, or remaining engrossed in seeing to Hadrat and serving him. Having his meals at regular times and sleeping at the normal hour were issues that had become long forgotten. He could neither sleep peacefully, nor remain at ease while awake. He eventually went to speak to a traditional vedic doctor and told him: "My brother is ill. I would like you to come and see him." The doctor was a very well-mannered and courteous person. There were several patients who were waiting to be treated and some of them were describing their illnesses to the doctor, but when he saw the concern and consternation on the face of the person who had just arrived, he said to him: "Wait for two minutes, we will go just now." He examined the remaining patients as quick as possible and proceeded to examine Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. He checked his pulse, his urine sample, and listened as he recounted his illness from beginning to end. He consoled all those who had been tending to Hadrat, comforted them, raised their spirits, gave him a few tablets and instructed him to take one immediately. He was given one tablet and, by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, he felt some relief, but not enough to give confidence to everyone.

They continued with the treatment of the traditional doctor and followed his recommendations. Although he recovered from some of his symptoms, there was no respite in the actual illness. Hadrat started to experience convulsions which followed one after another. It made his frail body even weaker. Everybody remained in Bombay for one month and, during this time, Munshī 'Alā' ad-Dīn Sāhib's wife passed away. It became difficult for the entire caravan to remain in Bombay. They had no alternative but to continue on their journey. Hadrat accompanied the Rāmpūrī caravan by rail until they reached the Kisārī pass. By then the railway reached up until this point. They covered the distance from Kisārī to Indore in various hired conveyances.

Upon reaching Indore, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib decided to remain behind and first get treatment for Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. His condition had been deteriorating daily. This was aggravated by the fact that they were constantly changing conveyances – carts, ox-wagons etc. – and moving over hard, uneven terrain. The patient [Imām Rabbānī] did not have the strength to continue his journey in this manner. He therefore decided to remain in Indore for an unspecified time and asked the rest of the caravan to continue on their journey without them. He had made up his mind to see to his brother's [Imām Rabbānī] treatment here.

The caravan had run out of money. Several months had passed since they had left home and the weariness and fatigue of the journey had left every person exhausted. Thus, no one was ready to remain with Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr during this unspecified delay. The caravan thus proceeded towards Rāmpūr. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr sacrificed his rest, comfort, honour, respect – in fact, he sacrificed his life – solely for Hadrat. Him and his wife remained outside the city in the same lodge in which they had planned to stay only temporarily.

When Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr had left home, he had taken a woman

by the name of Wilāyatan with them as an attendant. Her entire expenditure was borne by him. When they reached Bombay, she became angry with him over some trivial matter⁵² and refused to continue on the journey with him. She continued on her own until she reached Gangoh. Look at Allāh's Power! At a time when several attendants were needed to see to Hadrat and this previous attendant had departed, Allāh ﷻ provided him with another attendant immediately. When they were at the Kisārī pass, a person by the name of Rahmatullāh offered his services, together with that of his wife, to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib saying: "Take us with you, I will do your work for you and my wife will help your wife with the house work." He considered this to be the Unseen Assistance of Allāh ﷻ and agreed. Husband and wife rendered excellent services, but unfortunately they could not remain with Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr in Indore. Because of the unusual and unspecified nature of their stay in Indore, the couple sought his permission and departed.

Hājī Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib Rāmpūrī was especially helpful to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib in tending to Hadrat, but he had also departed with the caravan from Indore. No one apart from Maulwī

⁵² Imām Rabbānī's illness had reached its limit and had caused people to lose hope in his recovery. Constant observation of this condition caused Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and his wife to cry profusely and to remain silent and dumbfounded for hours on end. Although Wilāyatan was their companion on the journey, their condition did not concern her in the least. On one occasion, Wilāyatan – as per her habit – asked for food and said to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr: "Eat your food." He was fully engrossed in his worry and concern over Hadrat and said to her: "Go, look at my brother's condition – and you are only concerned about food!" She went into a rage and struck him with a pail. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr could not tolerate this audacity and intemperance of his worker and slapped her twice. She left and proceeded to Gangoh on foot. (Hāfiẓ Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib)

Abū an-Nasr Sāhib remained to tend to Hadrat during his terrifying sickness. If he were to leave the house, there would have been no one to see to Hadrat. If he were to remain in the house all the time, there would be no one to go to the shops in order to purchase basic food items like pulses and flour. There is no doubt about the sterling service which was rendered by Maulwī Abū an-Nasr's wife – in no way did she lag behind her husband in this regard. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon her. If a chaste and noble woman is able to render services to her husband, parents, children, brothers and sisters, the most she could do is what Maulwī Abū an-Nasr's wife did for Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. Nevertheless, she was a woman and thus she could not step out of the house. Moreover, here she was faced with a calamity which even men could not bear. Despite this, she took the courage and gave solace to her husband saying: "Continue serving Hadrat without any worry, I will carry out all the domestic chores, you must see to the needs which are related to that which is outside the house. Allāh ﷻ is our Protector and Guardian. *Inshā Allāh*, the outcome will be good."

Maulwī Abū an-Nasr was a total stranger to Indore. He had no friend in the city. He did not know anyone and there was no one to help him. The ten to twelve travelling companions who had become his close friends over the past few months had all departed. The provisions which he had carried for the journey were on the verge of being depleted. Despite all these difficulties and obstacles, his desire for the health and survival of his beloved brother [Imām Rabbānī] took precedence over everything else.

Hakīm Muḥammad A'zam Khān, the author of *Iksīr A'zam*, was employed as the personal physician of the Rajah and was earning one thousand rupees per month. He was living in Indore. He was a very famous Hakīm and, for that reason, Maulwī Abū an-Nasr left the lodge and proceeded directly towards his house. He greeted him, sat down and said: "I am a traveller. My brother is very ill and I remained in Indore with the intention of obtaining treatment for

him. If you could kindly accede to my request, Allāh ﷻ will reward you greatly.”⁵³

Hakīm Muḥammad A'zam Khān was employed by the Rajah of Indore and, apart from being paid a thousand rupees per month, he enjoyed numerous other benefits. However, he was very independent and free by nature. A messenger arrived and conveyed the message that the Rajah was calling him. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib was seated in his company when this happened. Hakīm Muḥammad A'zam Sāhib made a stern face and replied: “Tell him I cannot come at present.” Upon seeing the Hakīm Sāhib’s independence and stern nature, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr became terrified and thought to himself: “What is going to happen to the poor sick traveller who needs to be attended to free of charge?” Hakīm Sāhib – through his intuition – immediately expelled such thoughts and said: “Maulānā, this reply does not apply to you.”

He immediately rose and together they walked to the lodge where Hadrat was lying on his sick-bed. He checked his pulse, asked about the history of his condition from beginning to end, consoled him, wrote a prescription and departed. At this point it became clear that his refusal to go to the Rajah (governor) was due to the fact that he had to attend to the king [Imām Rabbānī].

⁵³ Hakīm Sāhib asked him: “Where are you from?” He replied: “I am from Gangoh.” He asked: “Do you know Hakīm 'Atā Husayn Gangohī? I haven't heard about him for quite some time.” Hakīm 'Atā Husayn Sāhib was Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's maternal uncle. And so, he explained his relationship to Hakīm Sāhib and provided other details about his uncle. Upon hearing all this, Hakīm Sāhib said: “Hakīm 'Atā Husayn Sāhib is my benefactor and you are from his hometown and his close relative. I think you should rent a house which is close to my house so that I could monitor the patient. You should go and see Muṣāhib 'Alī who is an agent for Maulwī Mustafā Khān, the owner of Mustafā'ī Press Kānpūr. Muṣāhib 'Alī will be able to help you to obtain a house.”

This was the first occasion on which Allāh's 'Unseen Assistance' became evident to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr in his solitude. After this, wherever he went, some sort of relationship or indirect association and connection would be established. Acting upon Hakīm Sāhib's advice, he went to look for a house and arrived at Muṣāḥib 'Alī Sāhib's place. His mere acquaintance with Hakīm Sāhib proved to be beneficial. He cordially met Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib and informed him about the house of Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn. Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn was a teacher at Madrasah Halkar.

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib went to Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Sāhib and made a request for the house. He also received him with great warmth and asked him about his hometown. Look at Allāh's Power! The word Rāmpūr came out of his mouth. Rāmpūr was the hometown of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's paternal forefathers. Upon hearing the name Rāmpūr, Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn asked him about Maulwī Muḥammad Nawāz, who happened to be the maternal uncle of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's wife. When Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn heard of his close relationship with him, he said: "He [Maulwī Muḥammad Nawāz] was my teacher. I can never repay him for his favours. You are most welcome to come and live in the house. My associates and I are all at your service."

This was another open manifestation of Allāh's Grace. With absolute honour and respect, the male and female quarters at Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn's house were given to Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib at no cost. Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn's wife had recently passed away and she had left behind just one young daughter. Thus, he experienced no discomfort whatsoever in hosting these travellers, hājīs, and relatives of his affectionate teacher. In short, Hakīm Muḥammad A'zam Sāhib's treatment commenced immediately and he would come daily, on foot, to check on Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's progress without accepting any monetary remuneration.

Bearing in mind the severe medical condition, the medication which was prescribed by Hakīm Sāhib did not do much to benefit the poor financial position in which they found themselves. The medicine included musk and amber. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr thought – and he was correct in thinking so – that the money which was needed for the medication would be enough to perform hajj. Considering his poor financial position, he hesitated in going to the perfumer's shop. However, when he considered his beloved's illness, he decided that he would be willing to sell his life – but he was not willing to regret not obtaining the medicine. He eventually placed his trust in Allāh ﷻ and proceeded to the perfumer's shop. The perfumer noticed that he was a traveller and started speaking to him about various other matters. During the course of their conversation, he learnt that Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib was very closely related to Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm – the fort commandant of Bhopal. For that reason he received him very courteously and gave him the expensive medications which were listed in the prescription at cost price. In short, one or two doses of the medication was given to Imām Rabbānī. Allāh ﷻ – the One Who is the Source of all cures – had destined it so that a lot of *Dīnī* service was still in store for Imām Rabbānī and thus, He had destined for him to be cured at the hands of the author of *Iksīr A'zam*. He felt a difference in his condition the very next day and his illness started to subside daily.

Another manifestation of Allāh's 'Unseen' Help was demonstrated during their stay in Indore. Sikander Jahān Begum, the governess of Bhopal, decided to go on hajj and she stopped over at Indore during the days when Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr was tending to Imām Rabbānī with '*ambarī* (amber) mixtures. Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm, the fort commandant of Bhopal, was accompanying the governess on her journey. He was the uncle of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's wife. Maulwī Muḥammad Nawāz's sister was married to Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm's brother. His name was Munshī Khayr ad-Dīn. Munshī Khayr ad-Dīn was a minister in the Bhopal government. His daughter – Maulwī Muḥammad Nawāz's niece – was Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's

wife and she happened to be in Indore, tending to Imām Rabbānī, together with her husband. Upon reaching Indore, Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm went to meet Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr who also invited him on two occasions during those difficult days.⁵⁴

When the governess heard that Munshī Khayr ad-Dīn's daughter was present in Indore, she complained about the fact that his daughter had not come to meet her and sent a message requesting her to come and meet her. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's wife had been on a journey for many months and was completely engrossed in tending to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. She was therefore living in a very poor and patient condition. Although she was completely happy and thankful to Allāh ﷻ, she did not consider herself to be in an appropriate position to go and meet the honourable and distinguished governess. She sent the following message to her: "It is not appropriate for me to visit you in my present condition. Presenting myself, while I am a traveller, may be misconstrued as a visit with worldly motives. People may think that I have arrived to ask favours from you. I therefore do not have the courage to come on this occasion. I hope I will be excused."

The intelligent and perceptive Begum respected Khayr ad-Dīn's daughter's noble thoughts. She sent two hundred rupees to the house with Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib with the message that a meal should be prepared on her behalf and that the money should be used as they pleased. The governess continued on her journey for hajj.

⁵⁴ When Hājī 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib, the paternal uncle of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's wife, learnt that his niece was staying in Indore, he came with his friends and stayed over at his niece's place. These people [Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr and his wife] were themselves in a difficult financial position and had very little money, but they endured the difficulty and hosted these visitors. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr had brought an Egyptian edition of *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* from Makkah. He sold this book in order to buy food to feed his guests.

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib's status in Indore had increased drastically. Senior people of the city now regarded him with respect. The two hundred rupees were of great help towards Imām Rabbānī's treatment and other expenses for their journey. All the money was not needed for the meal. The money which they had with them had not been depleted as yet and Allāh ﷻ had provided them with a considerable amount of money. By virtue of Hakīm Muḥammad A'zam Sāhib's medication, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's health was improving by the day. His weak and frail body was regaining its strength. He was able to change his posture and occasionally had the strength to sit up. Not only did Hakīm Sāhib permit him, but he advised him saying: "Your condition is quite satisfactory. You may proceed to your hometown, but you must continue taking the medication until your body regains its strength completely."

Consequently, after remaining in Indore for one month, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib proceeded towards his hometown with his patient. He continued to feed him the 'ambarī mixture. They traversed the different stations and stopping points and eventually reached Gangoh safe and sound.⁵⁵ Upon reaching Gangoh, Hadrat regained his strength quite quickly and, within six to eight months,

⁵⁵ On the way they stopped over at Gwalior and thereafter at Meerut. "Al-hamdulillāh, the author's [Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī] hometown also enjoyed the privilege of hosting Hadrat, although it was just once while he was ill. However, this much is in itself a source of great joy." They stopped at some other place as well where Hadrat's sincere *khādim*, Hājī 'Abd al-Majīd – who was employed in the Bhopal army – came to meet Hadrat. When Hadrat reached Gangoh, he did not even have the strength to get off the conveyance by taking support on the shoulders of anyone. His cousin, Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib, who was older than Hadrat and was the father-in-law of Hakīm Sāhib, carried him off the conveyance by carrying him on his back. (Hāfiẓ Muḥammad Ya'qūb)

he was fully cured. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ.

I did not consider it necessary to relate the incidents which took place during the course of this journey and therefore did not include them. The full extent of the service which Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Ṣāhib had rendered to Ḥadrat is known to all of Ḥadrat's associates. That is why I confined myself to relating the gist thereof. His service to Ḥadrat is mentioned by way of appreciation. Imām Rabbānī used to describe his service with the words: "Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr is my mother. There is probably no part of his body which was not soiled by my urine and excreta." Numerous 'Unseen' forms of Assistance were manifested during this entire incident and they can be referred to as Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī's *karāmat* (miracle). The necessary aspects regarding this incident were thus related. In actual fact, the brief aspects which were mentioned regarding the service which was rendered by Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr, are truly valued and worthy of remembrance and appreciation.

The time of rendering the service has now passed. The one who was served has proceeded to Jannatul Firdaus and the one who served him [Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr] is waiting to continue his journey to the Hereafter. However, for as long as the biography of Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣāhib – *Tadhkiratur Rashīd* – exists, this service will never be forgotten.

As for the Hereafter ... if this sincere and devoted service to the Shaykh-e-waqt and *Qutb-e-zamānah* is accepted – and *inshā Allāh* it will certainly be accepted – it will be a treasure house of eternal salvation and a source of acquiring the everlasting pleasures of the Hereafter.

ذلك فضل الله يؤتيه من يشاء والله ذو الفضل العظيم

Ḥadrat had left for hajj at the beginning of 1280 A.H. and had finally returned to his hometown in Muharram, 1282 A.H. Six years

after his return, he was blessed with another son. Maulwī Maḥmūd Aḥmad Sāhib was born in Rajab 1287 A.H. He bid farewell to this world in his youth on 16 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1310 A.H. while his father was still alive.

THE BAY'AH OF ḤADRAT MAULĀNĀ KHALĪL AḤMAD SĀHIB AMBHETWĪ

A chronological study of Imām Rabbānī's life will demonstrate that, just as Ḥadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib was the first 'ālim to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of A'lā Ḥadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, so Ḥadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib was the first 'ālim to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of Imām Rabbānī. A'lā Ḥadrat Hājī Sāhib's sister-in-law had had a true dream in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to her: "Get up, you are not qualified to cook food for the guests of Imdādullāh. His guests are 'ulamā' and I will cook the food for his guests."

This dream was realized when Imām Rabbānī became his first direct guest [the first 'ālim who took *bay'ah* to him] and from this spiritual lineage, Ḥadrat Maulānā [Khalīl Aḥmad] Ambhetwī became A'lā Ḥadrat Hājī Sāhib's first indirect guest [because he was the first 'ālim who took *bay'ah* to Imām Rabbānī].

I consider it necessary to relate the circumstances which surrounded Maulānā Ambhetwī's *bay'ah* to Imām Rabbānī. I quote, verbatim, the letter which Ḥadrat Maulānā [Khalīl] had sent to me when I requested it.

"All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ. Peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This insignificant servant, Khalīl Aḥmad – may Allāh pardon him – says to his brothers in *tarīqah*: Once the hearts of the attendants of Ḥadrat Makhdum Imām Rabbānī Maulānā al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Hāj Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad *rahimahullāh* had settled a bit after his demise, it became their ardent desire to: (1) have his biography

compiled, (2) compile his *maktūbāt* (writings and correspondence) and publish them separately, and (3) compile his explanations to complex questions which were posed to him by different '*ulamā*' during the course of his Hadīth lessons, and to have these published separately as well.

Just as Allāh ﷻ had made him the fountain and spring of His Vast Mercy while he was alive, so he had remained an ocean from which every person – near and distant – could drink when he departed from this world. There is a famous saying: "The weight of an elephant can only be borne by an elephant." Not every person could bear this responsibility [of writing a biography on Imām Rabbānī]. Quite a bit of time had passed while deciding who should take up this task. Eventually it was decided to delegate this enormous service to Maulānā al-Hāj Maulwī 'Āshiq Ilāhī Sāhib who is most capable of it. Furthermore, each person should record his memories and recollections and send it to him. He will choose whatever he feels appropriate in order to compile the book. He accepted this responsibility and asked this insignificant servant to pen down whatever recollections I had about Hadrat *rahimahullāh* and to send it to him.

Although I am presently an old *khādim* from among Hadrat's *khādims*, I do not know of anyone at present who pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat before me. Since I was always kept outside after pledging *bay'ah* and had very few occasions to present myself before Hadrat – not to mention the fact that my memory has become rusty – I am not able to relate many incidents. However, I am writing a few words in fulfilment of his [Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī's] request.

I did not have any special contact with Hadrat *rahimahullāh* prior to pledging *bay'ah* to him, nor did I enjoy any close tie of kinship with him even though both Hadrat's lineage and mine stretches back to Hadrat Abū Ayyūb Ansārī ؓ. Since my family's kinship was attached to Hadrat Sayyid Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī Ambhetwī

rahimahullāh, we were referred to as *pīr zāde* (progeny of a Shaykh). Out of ignorance, some of our latter progeny claimed to be *sayyids* (from the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ). The customs and innovations (*bid'āt*) which are common among the *pīr zāde* were common in our family as well. We used to consider experiencing ecstasy (*hāl*) while playing drums and musical instruments during an *'urs* to be the peak of *tasawwuf*. Although these influences of this *pīr zādagī* were found amongst those in my lineage, it was relatively weak and subdued and we valued both the *'ulamā* and knowledge.

The above-mentioned *bid'ah* influences were weak in my lineage for the following reasons: (1) My grandfather, Shāh Aḥmad 'Alī Sāhib's father, Hadrat Shāh Qutb 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was no ordinary *pīr zādah*. In fact, he was a highly respected saint of the Chishtīyyah Sābirīyyah order. He had reached high levels of spirituality and had experienced extraordinary incidents and events. He used to remain engrossed in *dhikr* and *fikr* (remembrance and reflection) by night and day. (2) My grandfather's mother was blessed with having pledged *bay'ah* to Mujaddid-e-Waqt Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Barelwī *rahimahullāh*. (3) My father, Shāh Majīd 'Alī, and my uncle, Maulānā Maulwī Anṣār 'Alī – the father of Maulwī 'Abdullāh Sāhib who is the rector of Madrasah al-'Ulūm Aligarh – were linked by marriage to Janāb Maulānā Maulwī Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib Siddīqī Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. (4) My uncle, Maulānā Maulwī Anṣār 'Alī, presented himself to Maulwī Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in Delhi, studied under his tutelage, and qualified as an *'ālim* under him. It is through the blessings of this lofty family that knowledge had come to our family and it is due to them that my cousins and I studied in Deoband and Sahāranpūr. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ.

During my student days I had a slight acquaintance with Hadrat *rahimahullāh*, but merely considered him to be a pious *'ālim*. One day, while I was studying under my uncle – Maulwī Anṣār 'Alī – he

aid to me: "When you complete your studies, you must acquire *tasawwuf* from Maulwī Sāhib – that is, from Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib."

I was probably twelve or fourteen years old when I went to Gangoh during Ramadān. I went to the *khānqāh* to listen to him [Hadrat] reciting the Qur'ān. I stood under a *nīm* (margosa) tree and listened to his recitation. He was performing the *tarāwīh salāh* at the time. He had a very sweet voice and I can still feel the sweetness with which he was reading on that night in my heart. I still remember him reading the words *أَشْجَعُ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ*. I can now say that he was reading Sūrah al-Ahzāb at the time.

I got married in Gangoh while I was still studying and thus I had the opportunity of going there quite often. I used to frequently visit Hadrat *rahimahullāh* during my sojourns in Gangoh. I remember very clearly that I used to experience a special effulgence in that blessed place and my heart used to experience peace and tranquillity. This, notwithstanding the fact that I was neither his *murīd*, nor did I have any special affinity with him as yet. There I found people like Hāfiz 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib and Maulwī Altāf ar-Rahmān Sāhib, and others who had been purified from reprehensible qualities and had been embellished with praiseworthy qualities by virtue of remaining in Hadrat's company. Their character, simplicity, love for following the Sunnah and hatred of *bid'ah* was an exact emulation of that of the *Sahābah* رضي الله عنهم. Despite all this, the thought did not even cross my mind that I should request Hadrat to accept my pledge of *bay'ah*.

When I completed my studies and I was sent to the *madrasah* in Mangalore, district Sahāranpūr as a teacher, I was overcome by a unique condition and yearning for *'ibādah* (worship of Allāh ﷻ). In those days, the *halqah* (circle) of Janāb Qādī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib was very popular. I thought of attending, but at the same time I felt I should first consult my elders in order to obtain their

permission. I asked the advice of Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and he wrote to me saying:

الطرق إلى الله بعدد أنفاس الخلائق

*"The ways to Allāh are as many
as the amount of [individuals in His] Creation."*

Reaching Allāh ﷻ is not confined to one particular path. What you are doing at present is also a way of reaching Allāh ﷻ. It is not appropriate for you to sit in the *ḥalqah* at present."

It was probably during the year 1288 A.H. or 1289 A.H. when I thought of pledging *bay'ah*. Coincidentally, *Hadrat* Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* had come to Rarhkī. As per my request, he stopped over in Mangalore upon his return. When I was alone with him that night, I said:

المستشار مؤتمن

*"The person whose counsel is sought
is placed in a position of trust."*

"I intend pledging *bay'ah* and need your advice in this regard. There are several elders in our area: You are here. Then there is Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib, Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib and Qādī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib. I do not know what will be best for me. If you feel it will be best for me to be included among your *khādims*, accept me. If not, order me to do whatever you feel would be best."

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* replied with a lengthy lecture. The essence of his lecture was that, at present, there is no one better than Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib. I said: "He is very strict in accepting *bay'ah*. If you intercede on my behalf I will succeed in

obtaining his acceptance.” He replied: “Very well. The next time I go to Gangoh, you must come there.” I waited anxiously and a few days later I heard that Hadrat Maulānā was going to Gangoh.

I proceeded immediately and said to him [Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Nānautwī Sāhib]:

الكريم إذا وعد وفى

“The mark of a nobleman is that he fulfils his promise.”

He smiled and said: “Very well.” When he completed his discussions with Hadrat that morning, he sent for me. I presented myself to him in the room. Maulwī Sāhib [Hadrat Imām Rabbānī] was seated. I offered *salām* and sat down. Hadrat Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* remained silent. Hadrat smiled slightly and said: “These weavers and other ordinary people become my *murīds*, while you yourself are a *pīr zādah* (from the progeny of a Shaykh). You are of a high level, why do you want to pledge *bay’ah* to me?” When I had entered the room I was already overawed and felt intimidated. Upon hearing these words from him, I lost all my senses and was rendered speechless. The only thing I could say was this: “Hadrat, I am worse and more insignificant than them.” He said: “Okay, okay, go make *istikhārah*. I am coming to the Musjid just now.”

I proceeded immediately to the Musjid, performed *wudū’*, performed two *rak’ats* of *ṣalāh* and made the Sunnah *du’ā’* of *istikhārah*. Hadrat entered and asked: “What have you decided?” I replied: “My decision has not changed. Accept me as your servant.” Coincidentally, Maulwī Muḥammad Is-hāq Ambhetwī ibn Hamīd ‘Alī – who was studying under Hadrat, and to whom Hadrat was extremely affectionate – also entered with the intention of pledging *bay’ah*. Hadrat asked both of us to repent and admitted us into the *silsilah*. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ.

DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE

At the time when Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad was born, Hadrat's daughter was thirteen years and a few months old. She had completed studying the meaning of the Qur'ān and she was adept at domestic chores. Her Allāh-endowed mannerisms, character and personality had accorded her a distinguished position in the family and clan. The more she progressed in age, the more her piety, modesty and chastity increased. Her mother was an expert at handling domestic matters. What can then be said about the daughter who was fast approaching the time of running the affairs of her own home?

It was probably during this same year, after their return from hajj, that Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib started to experience migraines. The moment he would get up in the morning, he would experience a pounding headache on the one side of his head. As the day progressed, the pain would increase. He tried various medical treatments but did not find any relief. Eventually he started treatment under Hakīm Tafaddul Husayn Sāhib who, apart from being a *unānī* physician, was also an *'āmil*. The Hakīm Sāhib prescribed medicines for him and also resorted to *'amalīyyāt*. However, the pain did not decrease in the least. Instead, it started to increase in intensity. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib grew weary of the various treatments. He would take whatever medicine was available and try any new thing which anyone suggested to him. When he still found no relief, he became frustrated and gave up. A few far-sighted and wise relatives felt that he was not ill at all, but that an enemy had performed magic against him. They felt that it was a waste of time for him to take different medications and that he should rather be treated with *ta'wīdh*.

When the thought of magic came up, they inevitably started wondering who the guilty person could be. They tried to figure out who could have had the audacity to do such a hateful thing. They

eventually suspected two Shī'ahs who had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr in a court case. This happened a few days before the migraines had started. There were other factors which gave credence to their suspicions. The name of one of these Shī'ahs was Sādiq 'Alī and the other one's real name was not known, but he was well-known by the name Bhūlo. They were both considered to be *sayyids* – from the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ but, in the light of the general principles of their Shī'ism, they used to harbour enmity towards the Sunnīs and considered it meritorious to cause harm and damage to them. They had suffered a humiliating defeat in court and it would have been difficult for them to overcome this humiliation. They therefore felt that their suspicions against these two men were justified and were convinced that it must have been them who performed the magic which resulted in the migraines and which rendered all the physicians hopeless.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was in his room one day and his daughter was standing next to him, when his wife said in a very sorrowful tone: "Look at my brother (Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr). I wonder whether he will survive or not. The enemies did black magic (*sīḥr*) on him." Upon hearing these words Hadrat raised his head suddenly and, contrary to habit, looked at her sternly and said: "Then what? If they did it, they themselves will not survive – and the other one has already gone deaf!"

The words "has already gone deaf" were said in the past tense, informing us of something which happened in the past. However, Sādiq 'Alī was a healthy man and had no defective organs, though Bhūlo only had one eye. A person who could hear could not be referred to as a deaf person. Hadrat's daughter said in a surprising tone: "Deaf? Father, he has one eye." Hadrat replied: "Consider it to be gone and the other one is also gone."

These fiery words which issued from Hadrat's mouth were spoken

because of the misery which his beloved and devoted brother was suffering due to the actions of his enemies. They proved to be 'divining arrows' which could never miss their target. Consequently, the very day after Hadrat uttered these words, Sādiq 'Alī was afflicted by cholera from which he never recovered. Although he was alive, he continued suffering from this illness. Vomiting and diarrhoea gave him no peace whatsoever, his eyes became sunken, toxins spread throughout his body and he passed away the next day. Sādiq 'Alī passed away suddenly from cholera at a time when there was no sign whatsoever of this plague in the entire town. One moment he was on the surface of the earth and within a few hours he was buried in its bowels.

Within a month after Sādiq 'Alī's demise, his friend, Bhūlo, who had only one eye, lost his other eye as well and also became deaf. Hadrat's daughter relates: "This was the first *karāmat* which I had witnessed from Hadrat. I never had the occasion to witness anything like this before which I could call a *karāmat*." As soon as the two enemies experienced all this, Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr's illness started to decrease and he was fully cured from his migraines within a few days – without the use of any medication or *ta'wīdh*.

After Hadrat Imām Rabbānī returned from hajj and recovered from his illness, he became engrossed in teaching. The enjoyment which he received from following the Sunnah and having love for the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ increased day after day.

He developed a natural yearning for the ways of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – to the extent that he considered it an essential duty to emulate him in all his dealings and all his domestic matters. He desired to leave behind living examples of having revived redundant Sunnahs. He wanted to present occasions of grief [funerals] and weddings according to the prescriptions of the Sharī'ah and to demonstrate these to the world. It was his desire to show to the people how they should fulfil their worldly affairs in full emulation of the Sharī'ah.

This natural yearning caused his heart to desire that Safīyyah Khātūn's marriage should take place in an extremely simple fashion and that it should be in emulation of the marriage of the Lady of Paradise – Fātimah az-Zahrā radiyallāhu 'anhā.

Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib lived in the section of Gangoh which was referred to as the *sheher* (city). He was employed in the court as a deputy magistrate. He was a very righteous, pious and religious man. His lineage joins with Hadrat's lineage at some point. Both him and his wife had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib. Emulation of the Sunnah had a special effect on his heart. Consequently, it was well-known that even the most junior worker in his court would not accept any bribe whatsoever – no matter how many years he had been employed there. Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn had sent written and verbal requests to Hadrat in favour of his son Hāfiz Muhammad Ibrāhīm.

In addition to being a Hāfiz of the Qur'ān, Hāfiz Muhammad Ibrāhīm had studied the Sihāh under Hadrat and had had the honour of being in the same *daurah* class with students such as Maulwī Mūmin 'Alī Gangohī and Hāfiz 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib (Hakīm Sāhib's teacher and Hadrat's special student and *mujāz-e-Tarīqah [khalīfah]*). There was therefore no need to make inquiries about his character, habits, mannerisms, religiosity, knowledge and merits. However, in emulation of the order ...

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

“Take counsel from them.”

... Hadrat wanted to seek permission and counsel from his religious master and his relatives. Thus, he sent the following reply to the proposal: “I will give an answer after consulting my associates and friends. I cannot say anything at present.” Several months passed in these consultations. He informed all those whom he felt ought to be

informed, and sought advice from whomever he felt he ought to consult. When several months had passed without any reply, Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib – who had been waiting impatiently – could wait no longer. He sent Hājī Dīn Muḥammad, who was one of Hadrat's *khādims*, to inquire about Hadrat's decision. Hadrat replied: "I have received replies from everyone, but I am still waiting for a reply from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in Makkah Mu'azzamah. I am waiting for his reply and my decision will depend on what he says."

A'lā Hadrat's approval arrived from Makkah Mu'azzamah a few days later and Hadrat Imām Rabbānī came to a firm decision regarding his daughter's marriage.

This was the *masnūn* [Sunnah] proposal and 'engagement'. In their emulation of other nations and religions, Muslims of today give undue importance to it. They have introduced numerous types of customs and futile activities and thereby burdened themselves. No sooner did Hadrat receive the letter from Makkah Mu'azzamah, when he sent a message that he will perform Saffīyyah's *nikāh* the following Friday. Hadrat's wife felt it would be better if the marriage could be delayed by a few months because she had certain needs and tasks to fulfil. However, Hadrat wanted to adhere to the Sunnah at every step and to make the accepted way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ his guide. He did not consider it appropriate to delay the *nikāh* any further. He said: "Hadrat Fātimah *radiyallāhu 'anhā*'s marriage took place when she was sixteen years old – therefore this is *masnūn*. Since Saffīyyah has turned sixteen, I will get her married now."

This blessed marriage took place in the blessed year of 1289 A.H. during the month of Rabī' al-Awwal – the month which enjoys sanctity due to the fact that it was also the month in which the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ had taken place. Furthermore, it took place on a Friday, which is not only a day of 'īd for the believers, but the most

auspicious day of the week. In short, the remaining days passed in talks and conversations until the following Friday arrived. It had been decided that the *nikāh* would be performed after the *jumu'ah* *ṣalāh*.

On the Friday morning, the female relatives who lived nearby were informed thus: "Safīyyah is getting married today. Anyone who wishes, may attend the wedding." Some time before the *jumu'ah* *ṣalāh*, Hadrat sent Hājī Dīn Muḥammad with a verbal message to Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Ṣāhib saying that Hāfiz Ibrāhīm must perform the *jumu'ah* in *Sarā'e* [the section of Gangoh where Hadrat lived]. The closest female relatives arrived and they were provided a meal. Two sets of clothing were tailored for the groom but it was not given to him on the day of the marriage. An announcement was made after the *jumu'ah* *ṣalāh* informing everyone of the *nikāh* and requesting them to remain behind. After completing the *Sunnah* *ṣalāh*, Hadrat read the *nikāh* sermon, the offer and acceptance (*ījāb wa qubūl*) was done, and dry dates were distributed. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī fulfilled the *Sunnah* of *mahr-e-Fātimī* in the marriage contract by saying: "In exchange for the dowry of four hundred *mithqāls* which is equivalent to a hundred and fifty Indian rupees and which was the dowry of Hadrat Fātimah radiyallāhu 'anhā."

After completing the *nikāh*, Hadrat sent a message home saying: "You may bid farewell to the girl." A *dolā*⁵⁶ was placed by the door and Safīyyah was sent with absolute simplicity from her home to the home of her in-laws. The mother who had borne this *amānah* (trust) in her womb for nine months and then brought her up with love and affection for sixteen years, now handed her over forever to Hāfiz Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ṣāhib. She was sent in a very simple way – without any drums, music, trunk of *jahīz* (dowry) clothes,

⁵⁶ A type of carriage [an enclosed chair] in which women were carried.

box of jewellery, bed or stool. This was a scene which would even reduce outside women to tears. What, then, can be said of the mother and the aunt? Consequently, when Safīyyah Khātūn was placed in the *dolā*, the restlessness of the family and the anxiety of the mother was beyond description.

Although Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was a mountain of self-control, he could not control himself when he saw his young daughter crying and trembling when she left as a bride to go to a stranger's house. This girl who, at the age of sixteen, was leaving her parents' home in which she had been brought up in the affectionate lap of her mother and under the loving shade of her father – the *Qutb* of the era. Hadrat tried to control himself at the time and saw his daughter off, but he called for her the very next day. When she came to her father's house the following day, Hadrat said: "I had originally intended calling my daughter after five days, but when Safīyyah's aunt was placing her in the *dolā*, Safīyyah was very restless. I could not bear seeing her in this condition, so I called her the very next day."

The little *jahīz* which her mother had prepared in accordance with their needs, as well as the two sets of clothing for the groom, were sent to the in-laws house on the Sunday without anyone knowing what and how much had been sent. This was the entire wedding for which thousands of customs are insisted upon these days and which is the cause of numerous fights and arguments.

بارك الله فيهما وجمع بينهما بالخير

"May Allāh bless the couple and unite them with well-being."

Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib was very much older than Hadrat. However, he had already pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Sayyid Sāhib – the *mujaddid* of his time. He therefore appreciated religiosity, piety and total adherence to the Sharī'ah and accorded

extreme respect to Hadrat for this reason. How could such a pious family follow traditional customs in a marriage? One cannot even imagine that Hadrat's daughter – who had been trained in the lap of the Sharī'ah – would ever see any evil custom in her in-laws' home. Maulwī Sirāj ad-Dīn Sāhib's possessed a lofty level of respect and consideration. When he brought the dry dates on the wedding day, he concealed them and placed them in the *khānqāh* room, lest Hadrat would come to know about it and scold him for bringing it. After the *nikāh* was concluded, he obtained permission from Hadrat to distribute these dry dates. In short, Imām Rabbānī concluded his daughter's wedding in an excellent manner and made it an example of emulating the Sharī'ah for the Muslims in general.

At the time when his father had sent the proposal, Hāfiz Maulwī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib had a dream. He dreamt that Hadrat Maulānā was present. There was a guava tree in front of him which had a few guavas on it. Hadrat picked one guava and gave it to him. When he woke up, he went to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī on the basis of the teacher-student relationship which existed between them and related the dream to him. Hadrat remained silent and did not provide any interpretation of it. All he said was: "We will see what happens." After the wedding, Hāfiz Sāhib realized what the interpretation to the dream had been. It meant that the fruit of the *Shaykh-e-waqt's* heart – his daughter – had been given to him in marriage.

Hadrat's daughter had pledged *bay'ah* to her father and had progressed considerably on the spiritual path. From among her various capabilities, it is sufficient for us to relate just the following: On one occasion Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said, "If women had been permitted to accept *bay'ah*, my Safīyyah would have initiated *murīds*." Despite this high level of perfection, she tried just as hard to conceal her condition. When spiritual and internal sciences were being discussed, she would remain silent and say: "I do not know anything in this regard."

On one occasion I presented myself to her in order to obtain some information on the *bay'ah* and education of women so that I could include the information in this book. She confined herself to relating the nature of her *bay'ah* by saying: "I had the desire to pledge *bay'ah* for quite some time but did not have the courage to express it. Eventually, one day, I said to my father: 'Accept my *bay'ah* as well.' Hadrat replied to my request as follows: 'O my daughter! There is no need for you to plead in this manner. You are mine. If you wish to repent [make *taubah*], well and good.' He went to his room after '*asr*', called for me and asked me to sit next to him. Both my hands were in his blessed hand, and he read the following verse:

وإذا جاءك المؤمنات يبایعنك

"When the believing women come to pledge *bay'ah* to you..."

He then uttered the words which are normally spoken at the time of *bay'ah* and accepted my *bay'ah*. He taught me the *latā'if* and asked me to read certain *du'ā's* from the *Ahādīth* as a *wird* (something which is read repeatedly)."

Apart from this, Hadrat's daughter did not relate any of her spiritual experiences and conditions. Despite numerous requests, and my persistence, she remained silent and refused to say anything. With great fervour Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib said: "Since you are not saying anything – here! I am saying it for you: 'I am consistent with the *latā'if-e-sittah*.'" Still she remained like a solid mountain. The brave and forbearing daughter of the Shaykh said nothing except: "I do not know."

May Allāh ﷻ bless her in her life, *Dīn*, excellence and close proximity to Allāh ﷻ and may He bestow her with progress. She is one valuable gem from amongst the women whom Shaykh-e-Waqt Qulb al-Ālam Maulānā [Rashīd Aḥmad] *rahimahullāh* had left

behind as an example of a woman who had been educated and trained by him. May Allāh enable us to benefit from her by giving her a long life.

Two years and two months later, during Jumādā al-Ūlā, Allāh blessed Hadrat Imām Rabbānī with a grandson, who was named Muhammad Is-hāq. He became a hāfiz of the Qur'ān and was a very righteous and pious young man. Unfortunately, he passed away at the tender age of eighteen during Rabī' al-Awwal in the year 1309 A.H. This was the third calamity of separation which the grandparents [Hadrat and his wife] had to bear, and the first calamity which was borne by the parents [Hadrat's daughter and her husband]. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

HAKĪM MAS'ŪD AHMAD SĀHIB'S WEDDING

Four years after Hadrat's daughter got married, and two years after Hāfiz Muhammad Is-hāq Marhūm was born, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī decided to arrange the marriage of his son, Hakīm Maulwī Hāfiz Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib. Hadrat made a firm resolve to get him married at the beginning of the year 1292 A.H. when he was seventeen years old. Hadrat's grandfather, Qādī Pīr Bakhsh Sāhib had four sons, the eldest of whom was Hadrat's father – Janāb Maulwī Hidāyat Ahmad Sāhib. The other three sons were Husayn 'Alī, Sābir Hasan and 'Alī Hasan. They were Hadrat's paternal uncles.

Husayn 'Alī Sāhib had three sons – Munshī 'Abdullāh, 'Abd al-Qayyūm and 'Abd as-Samī'. He also had two daughters. The eldest daughter was married to Muhammad Hasan Sāhib, and the younger one was married to Hadrat's elder brother – Maulwī 'Ināyat Ahmad Sāhib. The eldest of Hadrat's three cousins, Munshī 'Abdullāh, was employed in Punjab. It was decided that Hadrat's son, Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib, should get married to Munshī 'Abdullāh's daughter, Mahmūd an-Nisā'. The idea was first conveyed to

Hadrat's uncle and the girl's grandfather, Husayn 'Alī Sāhib, via the ladies of the house. However, since Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib was away at his work place [in Punjab], they were waiting for him, and could neither refuse the proposal nor accept it. All they said was: "We will give an answer when 'Abdullāh returns from Punjab."

When Munshī 'Abdullāh secured leave and arrived home, Hadrat's daughter and his wife went to their house with the proposal. They arrived there in the morning and thereby became the first guests of Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib for this new relationship which was to be established. After the '*asr salāh*', Hadrat and his uncle, Husayn 'Alī Sāhib, both went to Munshī 'Abdullāh's house and discussions regarding the proposal commenced. They did not get into very lengthy discussions because Husayn 'Alī Sāhib decided everything by saying: "Miyā 'Abdullah, listen to me – I am your father and also Rashīd Ahmad's father (العم صنو أبيه i.e. the paternal uncle is in the place of one's father). The boy and the girl are both my own. I am asking on his behalf and giving on your behalf. Right! I have now established the bond."

Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib remained silent regarding his father's decision and expressed his agreement out of consideration to him. However, he was very particular about worldly customs and formalities. He said: "I have no excuse, but the only thing that worries me is that I will only be able to send to his house that which I can afford. They must not send it back." Hadrat replied: "What is there to refuse? I will accept whatever you give, I have use for everything."

Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib was fully aware of Imām Rabbānī's views about customs and thus he said: "You have no consideration for the extended family. Where will it all be spent?" Hadrat replied: "Why should I give it to the extended family? I will give it to my poor and needy students and guests. There is therefore no need for me to

send anything back.”

in short, the bond was established. Hadrat returned to his house and the women also returned happily a short while later. This was the entire proposal and “engagement”. The marriage took place a few months after this incident, on 20 Safar 1292 A.H.

A few days before the due date of the marriage, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī sent a message to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*] and Janāb Hakīm Diyā’ad-Dīn Sāhib. Hadrat considered these two pious personalities and friends to be part of his extended family. Whether it was a sad or joyous occasion, a marriage or a circumcision – if anyone was to be invited, it would be these two personalities. If there was any reason to express joy, he would express his joy to them. Apart from maintaining ties of kinship, treating relatives kindly, fulfilling the rights of relatives and other orders of the Sharī’ah concerning one’s relatives, Hadrat did not have any worldly contact or interaction with the members of his clan. He did not adhere to any customary practices, such as those relating to proposals. For instance, amongst others, it was customary that a proposal should be made by a group of people from the clan and, when the bride departs from her home, she could not do so unless all the members of her clan were present.

His son’s marriage was a source of happiness to him, solely because it was a fulfilment of a Sunnah. That is why he invited only his *Dīnī* friends. He wanted to include his companions of the Hereafter in this *Dīnī* happiness. Since he did not intend giving more attention than necessary to this function, he confined himself to inviting only these two friends. At the same time, his other friends and associates were not unaware of it. Anyone who had a sincere relationship with Imām Rabbānī resolved to attend, even though they had not been personally invited. Those who did not have any serious obstacle arrived on time and offered their services to Hadrat.

Although this marriage was not announced, a large group of outsiders arrived and a *dastarkhwān* (table mat) had to be laid out for them for several days, with full reliance upon Allāh ﷻ. As long as they stayed, they continued benefiting from the food which was neither purchased for this purpose nor did it appear that it would suffice for such a large number of people.

One of the customs which Imām Rabbānī broke, was that of the barber's wife. It was customary that the barber's wife should take perfume, clothing and jewellery from the groom's house to the bride's house. She would carry it on a tray which was placed on her head. She would then refuse to lay down the tray unless she received whatever amount of money she asked for – or, at least, the customary wage. Hadrat handed over the clothing and whatever jewellery he could afford to his daughter and sent her off with these items. She sat in a *dolā*⁵⁷ and proceeded to the bride's home. She personally handed over the gifts and returned home.

The *nikāh* was performed in the evening. Neither was a judge summoned, nor was the register opened. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib read the *nikāh* sermon, the offer and acceptance was uttered, and a *du'ā'* for *barakah* was made. The *rukhsah* (sending off) took place the following day. Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib and Hājī 'Abd al-Majīd accompanied the bride's *dolā*. The bride was seated inside and transported from Munshī 'Abdullāh's house to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's house.

Not a single custom which is traditionally practised by the groom's family was adhered to. So much so, that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not even accompany the bride's *dolā* when she was being sent off. Munshī 'Abdullāh was very much attached to his customs and therefore he did whatever concerned him. He also complained

⁵⁷ A type of carriage [enclosed chair] in which women are carried.

about the father-in-law's [Imām Rabbānī's] absence from accompanying his daughter-in-law's *dolā*. However, since the complaint was regarding a custom, Hadrat did not even bother about it – let alone ask Munshī 'Abdullāh to pardon him.

One of the customary practices related to marriages was that the expenses of the poor from amongst the bride's family should be paid by the groom's family – and vice versa. This custom was also broken during this blessed marriage. When Munshī 'Abdullāh did not receive anything in this regard, he did not give anything either. Each side saw to their own expenses and the actual duty to serve their guests was happily fulfilled by both sides.

Before the *rukhsah* of the bride, the trunk containing the *jahīz* – clothes, utensils, bed, stool etc. – were all removed from the house and placed under the banyan tree. As per the custom, Munshī 'Abdullāh Sāhib started taking out one garment at a time from the trunk, displaying it to all who were present. The utensils were also displayed. Each item was counted and every single item – small or big – was shown to all. When this custom commenced, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī rose from the place where he was seated and proceeded towards his house in order to have his meal. He said: "The clothing is being displayed one after the other. What a futile and useless activity!"

Even on the day of the *rukhsah*, Hadrat's guests had their meals at his house – as they had been doing throughout their stay. Hadrat always said: "Once the bride arrives at the groom's house, all the food which is fed to friends and relatives is considered as the *walimah*." The wedding was now over and the guests started heading home, one after the other.

Once Hadrat was freed from the arrangements of this marriage, he made an intention to perform *hajj-e-badal* (hajj by proxy, or on behalf of someone else) on behalf of one of his parents. He

considered this to be an incumbent duty in exchange for the favours, bounties and acts of kindness which his father and mother had showered upon him. He felt that this difficult monetary and bodily worship [hajj] ought to be performed as *īṣāl-e-thawāb* for them. Thus, Hadrat's first *hajj-e-badal* (though his second hajj journey) was performed two years after this marriage in 1294 A.H. His third hajj journey (the second *hajj-e-badal*) was performed in 1299 A.H. We do not know on behalf of which one of his parents he performed the first or second *hajj-e-badal*. Nevertheless, Hadrat's first *hajj-e-badal* was the one which he performed with a group of senior '*ulamā*'. After this hajj, there is no record of any group of senior '*ulamā*' from India who collectively left in order to perform hajj again. This was Hadrat's second journey to the Hijāz. I consider it worthy to relate the necessary aspects of this journey.

SECOND HAJJ

In the year 1294 A.H. a war was being fought between two powerful countries – Turkey and Russia. Naturally, every Muslim desired the victory of the Islamic Sultanate and was making *du'ā* for it. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī decided to go for hajj during that year. When other personalities and elders heard of this intended blessed journey to the Hijāz, the most distinguished, and the cream amongst the '*ulamā*' of India, decided to join him.

When the Muslim masses saw these luminaries of India heading towards the Hijāz and the glittering lights of the country heading towards Arabia, it became a subject of numerous discussions. Those who had the means, prepared themselves to join them. The suspicion automatically rose into the minds of the people that these personalities were merely using the journey to the Hijāz as a smoke-screen in order to go and help their brothers, and that their actual destination was Turkey. They figured that these personalities were planning to join the Turkish army as volunteers and to fight as *mujāhideen* for the cause of Allāh ﷻ, and that those who were

destined for martyrdom would be martyred and earn the eternal life of the Hereafter.

The people's thoughts were totally wrong. First of all, not a single one from among those '*ulamā*' who were leaving had this intention. Secondly, these personalities were the commanders and leaders of the army which was waging the *jihād-e-akbar* (the greatest *jihād* of rectifying one's self) as taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The last, and most important reason, was that these personalities were the last few shining lights in the dark subcontinent of India. It was their *fard* duty to fulfil the deputyship of Rasūlullāh ﷺ by guiding the people of India who were drowning in the darkness of disbelief and sin. This was their *jihād* and this was where they would achieve high ranks. The journey to the *Hijāz*, for the sake of a *fard* *hajj* or *hajj-e-badal*, was in itself a very difficult and arduous journey. To go onto the battlefield to wield a sword was far-fetched.

However, there was no way of removing these incorrect beliefs and assumptions of the masses. Allāh ﷻ had willed for a large group of pious people to accompany Imām Rabbānī at least once. Thus, most of the personalities of Sahāranpūr and Muzaffarnagar, as well as some others from various other places, boarded the trains from whichever station was easily accessible to them. Some even left later on, with the intention of eventually joining the main group.

The well-known and famous '*ulamā*' who went on this journey were: (1) *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī, (2) *Hadrat* Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī], (3) *Hakīm* Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib, (4) Maulānā Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib with his wife, (5) Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, (6) Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib, (7) Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib, (8) Maulānā *Hakīm* Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib, (9) Maulwī *Hakīm* Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib, (10) Maulwī Sakhawāt 'Alī Sāhib Ambhetwī, (11) *Hadrat*'s special *khādim*, Maulwī Pīr Muḥammad Sāhib Sahāranpūrī, (12) Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib's special student, Maulwī *Hāfiz* 'Abd al-

'Adl Sāhib, (13) Maulānā Muḥammad Munīr Sāhib Nānautwī, (14) Maulwī Aḥmad Hasan Sāhib Kānpūrī, together with his wife, (15) Hadrat's nephew, Maulwī Altāf ar-Raḥmān Sāhib, and some others.

Hājī 'Abd al-Majīd Sāhib Gangohī and Hājī Zuhūr Aḥmad Sāhib Ambhetwī also joined this caravan. The entire caravan comprised of just over a hundred people. From amongst these, Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib, Hakīm Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib had left their hometowns on the 7th of Shawwāl and had reached Bombay. Hadrat Imam Rabbānī and his group boarded the train at Sahāranpūr station on the 12th of Shawwāl.

By the time this devout and famous group left on their hajj journey, steam trains had already started to commute up until Bombay. In addition to this, steam ships had started sailing between Bombay and Jeddah. Travellers would depart from Sahāranpūr to Ghāziyābād and exchange trains there. They would then leave the Ilāhabād-Calcutta line and change trains in Jabalpūr. There was a train service from Jabalpūr to Bombay, but there were only two trains operating. One was known as a passenger train. It would travel throughout the day and stop at whichever station night fell. There the night would be spent. The other train was known as a 'mail train'. It used to travel by day and night and was faster than the passenger train. The fare for the mail train was more than that of the passenger train. Apart from conveying a traveller slightly quicker to his destination, the mail train had no comforts whatsoever. Nevertheless, this was a small benefit for a person who valued time. In fact, the truth of the matter is that saving and valuing time is one of the most beneficial things.

Maulānā Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib's brother-in-law, Munshī Muḥammad Nadhīr Sāhib, was a tax-collector in Itāwah and his sister – Maulānā Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib's wife – was also travelling on this hajj journey. He insisted upon his brother-in-law

and the entire caravan that they should spend the night at his house and accept whatever food he had. The majority of Hadrat's travelling companions had a train ticket up until Itāwah. Some of the hājīs – either because they did not know about the stop-over in Itāwah, or for some other reason – had already purchased tickets for their onward journey from Itāwah.

The well-known governor of Itāwah, Munshī Mumtāz 'Alī Khān Sāhib, had left Itāwah for some work when he heard that this blessed group of people were going to stop over in Itāwah on their way to Bombay. He could not bear depriving himself of this excellent honour and promptly returned to Itāwah. Consequently, when the group reached the Itāwah station, Munshī Muḥammad Nadhīr Sāhib and Nawāb Mumtāz 'Alī Khān Sāhib, together with several hundred friends and associates, were waiting at the Itāwah station to welcome them.

What joy these two people must have experienced at acquiring this unexpected bounty of having India's 'soul of *Dīn* and *īmān*' as their guests! Those who had purchased tickets to Itāwah alighted the train. Those who had already purchased onward tickets agreed to this temporary separation. Had they not continued on their journey they would probably have had to forfeit their tickets and would have lost their money. When Nawāb Mumtāz 'Alī Khān Sāhib learnt of the reason for the separation, he insisted that they should all get off the train and said: "I will speak to the station master. I cannot allow you to refuse our hospitality and proceed to Bombay without staying over with us in Itāwah for a few days."

Consequently, the entire caravan got off the train, not knowing whether their original tickets would be accepted or whether they would have to buy new tickets for which Nawāb Mumtāz 'Alī Sāhib had taken the responsibility. Nevertheless, the two devoted hosts, Muḥammad Nadhīr Sāhib and the Nawāb Sāhib, invited all the guests and had the honour of remaining in their company and

seeing to their needs. Eventually, when the elders decided to leave, they accompanied the entire caravan to the station, seated them on the train, bid them farewell and remained standing on the platform until the train disappeared from sight, whereafter they returned home.

There was probably no city which did not know about this blessed caravan's journey to Arabia. Thus, no matter which station the train would stop at, a large group of Muslims would gather on the platform in their zeal to see these great personalities and to welcome them. Those who were destined to join them would seek their permission and join the caravan. Maulwī Ahmad Hasan Sāhib Kānpūrī had joined this group, together with his wife. Although he changed in the latter part of his life, he was very devoted to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī at that time. He used to spend hours massaging Hadrat's legs and, if Hadrat needed anything, he would hasten to get it.

After departing from Itāwah, the caravan reached Ilāhabād and from there they went on to Jabalpūr. Upon reaching Jabalpūr, some of them felt that they should continue by passenger train, while others felt that they should remain on the mail train. The majority considered time to be more valuable than comfort and therefore they decided to remain on the mail train. They made their reservations and divided the full cost of the caravan's train fare equally amongst themselves. The fare to Bombay thus worked out to twenty-five rupees per person. One side coach was allocated specifically to the women, the one next to it was allocated to the men who had come with their women-folk so that they could be close to them and so that the women in *purdah* would not be inconvenienced. The remaining men sat spread out amongst the other coaches as they preferred – without any distinction.

Each of Allāh's pious servants has his own special trait and peculiar qualities. Such differences were also found among these blessed

personalities. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī] had the special traits of choosing to live a life of poverty and abstention and he possessed an excellent character. Based upon this, he was always the centre and focal point of any assembly and people would literally rally around him. On the other hand, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's special trait was that of an academic, which was the result of the shining effects of prophetic deputyship. He was very serious and extremely simple by nature, a meticulous organizer, and he spoke very little. He would not speak unless he had to provide an answer to a question. On the odd occasion he would engage in a short, general conversation, but he would say nothing more than was necessary.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib and Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib used to engage in many discussions on *kushūf kaunīyyah* (different types of Divine Inspiration – *kashf*). They would explain different types of *kashf*, interpret dreams, give their opinions on whatever they felt to be correct, and would continuously discuss topics related to asceticism and sufism. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would remain completely silent during these discussions. He would remain seated as though he did not hear a single word. It is an accepted fact that the masses considered these leading personalities and pious leaders to be the greatest *walīs* and Sufis. However, when Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was seated in an assembly or gathering, no person would ever have considered him to have the slightest affiliation with asceticism and Sufism. People generally assumed him to be only a *maulwī* – but a powerful *maulwī* who possessed intricate knowledge of even the most complicated issues. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib and Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib used to say: "What can be said of Miyā Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad's lofty and graceful conduct? He absorbs everything without exposing anything [without exposing his high level of spirituality]. On the other hand, anything that comes into us flows out of us and is exposed."

Without a doubt, this was also said due to their humility and lofty spiritual status. When Allāh ﷻ creates a person for a particular task, he places in him capabilities and talents which will aid him in carrying out that task. In short, each blessed personality – with his own special trait and peculiar quality – reached Bombay safe and sound. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī stayed over in Miyā Rahmatullāh Ambhetwī's room in a Musjid. He was a *mu'adhdhin* in the Hakīm Ismā'īl Musjid and was well-known by the title of *Bāngī*.

Another example of the strict adherence to the performance of ṣalāh during the course of their train journey could never be found anywhere else. The ordinary *hājīs* were blessed with this due to the company of these great personalities. Even those who could not display any strength for ṣalāh due to laziness, sluggishness, weakness or fatigue were also instilled with enough vigour to perform it. The ordinary Muslims learnt – in a practical way – the meaning of 'strict adherence to ṣalāh with congregation' and how important ṣalāh should be to a Muslim – both at home and whilst on a journey. If it was known that the train would be stopping for a long enough period to allow them to perform their ṣalāh without any rush, they would perform their ṣalāh on the platform at railway station. Most of their ṣalāh were performed in this manner. If they feared the expiry of the *mustahab* time of ṣalāh, they would perform it inside the train, in congregation, as soon as the train stopped. If they did not get this opportunity either, they would perform it while the train was moving, but always in congregation.

Wudū' would be performed one or two stations before. Those who did not have *wudū'* would make efforts to obtain water in order to perform *wudū'* and they would try to maintain their *wudū'* for as long as possible. Those who could not find water, would perform *tayammum* and join the congregation. If a person was unable to perform his ṣalāh while standing, he would sit down in order to perform it. In short, they never allowed themselves to abstain from acting upon the Shar'ī concessions, nor did they abandon ṣalāh by

acting upon Shaytānic whispers of 'not being able to concentrate during such a ṣalāh'.

There is a famous story of an old man who was travelling with this group. He was uncertain by nature [always doubted whether he had wuḍū' or not]. Thus, he carried a clay jug with him on which he used to perform *tayammum*. The repeated striking of this jug had caused it to turn black.

The *imāmat* was in most cases allocated to either by Hadrat Imām Rabbānī or Mawlānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib. A third person would occasionally go forward. The ṣalāh used to be very short, but at the same time, all the Shar'ī requirements and concessions would be adhered to. On one occasion when the train stopped at a particular station, Mawlā Sakhāwat 'Alī Ambhetwī was asked to make *imāmat* and the entire caravan formed rows on the platform. Mawlā Sakhāwat 'Alī Sāhib made a lengthy recitation and his *rukū*' and *sajdah* were also quite lengthy – considering the fact that they were on a journey. When he completed the ṣalāh, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "Does anyone ever read such a ṣalāh while on a journey?" Everyone understood and realized that, if a Shar'ī concession is provided but not adhered to, it smacks of ingratitude and disrespect. After this, every ṣalāh was performed after giving due consideration to the time, place, concessions, as well as the frame of mind of those performing ṣalāh.

Many *karāmāt* were witnessed during the course of this journey, but it is our objective to relate a concise account of the journey, therefore we will overlook mentioning them. However, I feel it necessary to relate one particular *karāmat*.

Hadrat's nephew, Mawlā 'Azīz ar-Rahmān Sāhib relates: "It was *fajr* time. *Subh ṣādiq* had passed when the train stopped at a station. My uncle [Hadrat Imām Rabbānī] got off, performed wuḍū' and performed two *rak'ats* of Sunnah ṣalāh. When the Muslims who

were on the train saw the preparations for the *fajr* congregation, almost all of them got off, quickly performed *wudū'* and joined the congregation. Several rows of people were performing *ṣalāh* peacefully on the platform at the station when the train's whistle blew, announcing the time of departure. Upon hearing the whistle, numerous people broke their *ṣalāh* and rushed into the train. They boarded the train and began laughing loudly, saying to each other: 'What an excellent *ṣalāh* we performed!'

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and his companions continued with their *ṣalāh* with utter tranquillity. There was absolutely no anxiety or unease in his manner or voice. Look at Allāh's Power! The *ṣalāh* was continuing on the one side while the train was whistling on the other side, but it could not proceed a single inch. The *muṣallīs* completed their *ṣalāh*, made a short *du'ā'* and boarded the train. The train proceeded the moment Imām Rabbānī and his companions boarded. The train had stopped for a full fifteen minutes, but somehow managed to make up for lost time by moving faster. I am sure that the reader can understand that the train's stopping and its inability to continue was a clear and visible *karāmat*." I [ʿĀshiq Ilāhī] consider Imām Rabbānī's determination, his full engagement and concentration during *ṣalāh*, and the control which he practiced during *ṣalāh* – so much so, that he did not pay any attention to the whistling of the train – to be a metaphysical *karāmat*. People with insight would consider this far more enlightening. Had the train proceeded and Hadrat had to board another train, it would not have altered or decreased this metaphysical *karāmat* in the least. Metaphysical *karāmāt* of this nature were displayed by this caravan at every step of the way. However, since only physical *karāmāt* are considered to be *karāmāt*, Allāh ﷻ displayed this as a physical *karāmat* as well, so that those who broke their *ṣalāh* and laughed at the others would be warned and this incident may be a means of their guidance.

Upon reaching Bombay, the caravan had to wait for twenty-two

days. They were waiting for a ship, but there was no sign of one. People were becoming anxious and stressed. One day, Hadrat Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib said: "It has come to my knowledge that it is Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib who is holding back the entire caravan. He is expecting some of his friends and associates to arrive from Muzaffarnagar. As long as they have not reached Bombay, the ship will neither arrive, nor will it depart." Consequently, this was exactly what had happened. The day the Muzaffarnagar caravan reached Bombay, a German ship arrived and Hājī Qāsim hired the ship. That evening the ticket office was opened and tickets were being sold. Two types of tickets were on sale – those for the covered section, and those for the open section. Most of the members of the caravan bought tickets for the open section. The small boats started to arrive at the harbour the following day. All the travellers departing for Jeddah climbed onto these boats and proceeded to the main ship. The ship turned towards Arabia the following day, whistled to announce its departure, and pressed forward.

The ship's captain was a Christian, but he hailed from a noble family and possessed a good character. The travellers therefore experienced a lot of comfort. They could spread their bedding anywhere they liked in order to reserve a place for themselves. Whenever the captain walked by and found no place to pass, he would laugh, smile and say: "Hājī bābā! Give me some space to pass."

Long rows would be formed for ṣalāh and all five ṣalāhs would be performed in congregation. The captain would observe this wonderful 'ibādah' being performed in a methodical manner. This pleased him greatly and he spoke very highly of it.

On the eighth day the ship anchored in Aden, stopped over for one day and night, and the following day it departed for the Hijāz. On the fourth day they spotted the Jeddah harbour. The entire caravan

reached Jeddah with absolute ease and comfort on the thirteenth day after departing from Bombay.

During this trip, the captain had become quite attached to these travellers who were going for hajj and thus he offered to take them on a ride to the Suez – free of charge. However, they did not consider it appropriate to waste their time on such a futile trip and declined his generous offer. The ship anchored in Jeddah and the captain requested his travellers to sign a letter, testifying to the comfort which they enjoyed while on board and expressing their satisfaction. He requested this because it would have aided him in improving his position with his employer and would have helped him to obtain a promotion.

The easy-going nature and kindness of this good-natured Christian had really provided the travellers with comfort and joy throughout their journey. Therefore they all happily acceded to his request. Their expression of comfort and satisfaction was written in Arabic, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī signed it, the rest of the caravan signed it, and this document of appreciation was handed over to the captain. The captain kissed it, placed it on his eyes, then placed it on his head and said: "This is a certificate in my favour." The document of approval was translated into English and also handed over to the captain.

During the entire journey at sea, each of the personalities displayed his peculiar traits and characteristics. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib would remain at the centre of the assembly most of the time and shower the people with words of wisdom. On the other hand, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to remain occupied in serving the hājīs, seeing to their comforts, safeguarding their possessions and making other arrangements. He used to monitor the possessions of his fellow travellers, ensuring that it did not get lost or misplaced. If anyone became sea-sick, he would repeatedly go to the person, comfort him, console him and feed him chutney, achār, or anything

else which was available. If anyone found his place on board uncomfortable, he would look for another place which suited him better. If he found anyone sad and grief-stricken, he would console him. In the event of the absence of the owner, the sacks of grain and other foodstuffs, or the trunks of goods and necessities, would sometimes be taken below deck or into the store-house. If any of Hadrat's companions needed their sacks or trunks, Hadrat would ask them to provide a description of it. He would then go below deck, make inquiries, search for the items, identify it, and have it removed and conveyed to the owner.

When the ship approached Yalamlam, the captain announced: "Hājīs! Put on your *ihrāms*." Upon hearing this, Hadrat delivered a talk in which he explained the fundamentals of hajj. He put on his *ihrām* and demonstrated to his fellow travellers how to don the *ihrām*.

Maulwī Muḥammad Aḥsan Meerutī Muḥājir Makkī [who had emigrated to Makkah] had obtained *mutawwifī* (permission to be a guide and escort for hājīs) that very year. When he learnt that the blessed group of *auliyā'* from India were coming to Arabia, he went to A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib to seek permission from him to go to Jeddah in order to receive these great personalities. He received and welcomed the entire caravan at the harbour. It was his good fortune that he could commence his *mutawwifī* in the company of such a blessed group of personalities. However, the other *mutawwifs* could not tolerate his good fortune and became envious of him. They created obstacles in his path and this prevented him from obtaining the camels which he needed to hire in order to transport this group. He had to wait for three days and only barely managed to obtain the camels on the fourth day. This caravan probably departed from Jeddah on the 20th of Dhū al-Qa'dah and headed towards Makkah.

While they were travelling by camel, Maulwī Muḥammad Munīr

Nānautwī Sāhib would sit with Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib most of the time. Hājī 'Abd al-Majīd Gangohī Sāhib sat with Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. There were two stopping points between Jeddah and Makkah. The first day's journey ended either at Bahrah or Haddah. The first caravan of camels which departed from Jeddah stopped at Bahrah. The other caravan stopped at Haddah. The caravan was divided in this way and they all reached Makkah the following evening.

A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had received news about the departure of his dear and beloved 'Indian caravan' from Jeddah. Despite his weakness and frail condition, he could not be deprived of fulfilling the Sunnah of going out of the city to welcome them. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows how long he waited there for their arrival. When the caravan reached the gate of Makkah, they all noticed A'lā Hadrat standing near the city wall with a girdle wrapped around his back. The beloved ones of the Shaykh, together with his devoted *khādims*, immediately jumped off their camels, hastened towards him and embraced him.

Maulānā Hakīm Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib reached him before the others. He stood next to A'lā Hadrat and started introducing each person to him, because night had already set in and many of the travellers had only met A'lā Hadrat on a few prior occasions and many had not seen him in quite a number of years. A'lā Hadrat was the embodiment of hospitality. Whether he knew the them or not – he embraced each and every member of the caravan and held him to his chest – that same chest which was filled with knowledge and *ma'rifat* (true recognition of Allāh ﷻ) – and he would not let go until the person himself tried to separate from him.

It was certainly not an ordinary matter to embrace a hundred people, smile at them, ask them about their wellbeing etc. – especially at a time when he was so physically weak and frail. A'lā Hadrat took the entire caravan to his quarters and accommodated

them there. A'lā Hadrat had acquired the quarters that very year and had not started living there as yet. He therefore considered it best to first host this blessed caravan in these quarters. A'lā Hadrat invited all of them for a meal the following morning. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said, "there are too many of us," but A'lā Hadrat replied, "my happiness lies in every person having a meal with me." This gave them no option but to comply.

Apart from a few people who had already made their own arrangements, the entire caravan stayed over at A'lā Hadrat's place. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī now had another opportunity to visit his Shaykh, remain in his company and derive limitless blessings from him. The time of hajj was fast approaching and thus he dispensed with everything else.

A major portion of his time was spent in A'lā Hadrat's company or in performing *tawāf*. His travelling companions learnt that, although Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was usually a mountain of self-control, he would be completely overcome with humility and devotion whilst performing *tawāf* and would struggle to control himself. On one occasion he was wearing a *kurtah* made from soft muslin cloth whilst he was performing *tawāf*. A *buzurg* (pious elder) was seated on the *matāf* (the platform where *tawāf* is performed) and was watching Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. When Hadrat passed by him whilst performing his round, he said something. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was completely engrossed in his *tawāf* and did not know what the *buzurg* had said. When he passed the *buzurg* during the second round, he said the same word more audibly. Hadrat listened to it attentively and realized that he was being addressed. He turned towards him and the *buzurg* said:

إِلْبَسْ لِبَاسَ الصَّالِحِينَ

"You must wear the garment of the righteous."

Hadrat pointed towards his *kurtah* and replied:

هَذَا لِبَاسُ الصَّالِحِينَ

"This is also a garment of the righteous."

The *buzurg* said:

لَا لَا خَشْنَ

"No, no! It must be of course fabric."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī replied:

طَيِّب بَارَكَ اللهُ

"Very well, may Allāh bless you."

Hadrat continued performing his *tawāf* until he had completed it.

Although Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib Rāmpūrī had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd, he was a *mujāz* of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and they enjoyed immense spiritual affinity. This is the reason why he had come to visit A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib for the second time, and why he had joined the blessed company of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī during this *hajj* journey. He had gone to Madīnah Munawwarah with Hadrat during his first *hajj* journey and thus, as soon as he had completed his *hajj* during this second trip, he proceeded directly from Makkah Mu'azzamah to Jeddah and returned home.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī departed for Madīnah, together with the rest of the caravan. The caravan was still outside Madīnah when night set in and the city's gates were shut. The caravan had to stay over in Munākhah. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and a few of the others rose early. They left the caravan at the time of *fajr salāh* and headed for Musjid-e-Nabawī. After completing their *salāh*, they presented

themselves before the blessed *raudah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and offered their *salāt wa salām* (peace and salutations) with great enthusiasm and yearning. They then sat in meditation in the area which is known as Muwājahah Sharīfah until sunrise. Hadrat then proceeded with his companions to meet Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib rahimahullāh.

What can be said about the unique bond which Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh shared with this group? He was most pleased upon seeing them and remained occupied for a long time questioning them about themselves. Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh was well-known as a person who spoke very little. He would remain engrossed within himself and would never utter a single unnecessary word. He also embraced those members of the group whom he had not met before and spoke affectionately to them. Maulwī Altāf ar-Rahmān Sāhib was not only Hadrat’s nephew, but loved his uncle dearly. Shāh Sāhib specifically asked Hadrat: “Who is this?”

Maulwī Altāf ar-Rahmān’s love for his uncle had reached a high level of intensity. He had studied under the tutelage of his uncle. When he completed his studies, his uncle wanted to send him away from his hometown for the sake of employment, but he could not bear the thought of being separated from his uncle. Even when he did go out of town upon A’lā Hadrat’s insistence, he would present numerous excuses and schemes in order to return. His uncle eventually had no alternative but to write to him and tell him to come back home.

When Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib took leave from his employment in Bhāwalpūr in order to perform *hajj*, he appointed Maulwī Altāf ar-Rahmān to take his place – as per Hadrat’s instruction. He went to Bhāwalpūr and managed to stay there for a few days, but he would cry most of the time because of his separation from his uncle. This was especially the case when he went to bed at night. He would shed tears for hours and constantly

change his posture [due to restlessness]. When he could not bear the separation any longer and wrote to his uncle several times and complained about the unsuitable weather and falling ill. He finally obtained permission to leave and, the moment he presented himself before Hadrat, he was completely healthy. Hadrat used to ask him repeatedly: "Alṭāf ar-Rahmān! What has happened to you? Why can't you work?" His only reply was: "I find it very difficult to remain separated from you."

For several reasons Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was also very attached to him: (1) He was his nephew. (2) He was his student. (3) He was a very righteous and pious person who emulated his uncle at every step. Hadrat loved him tremendously and therefore brought him along on this journey to perform hajj.

This blessed caravan remained in Madīnah Munawwarah for about twenty days. They visited the blessed places and had unique and enlightening experiences. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib appointed a person to take them wherever they wanted to go. Amongst other places, he took them to Musjid-e-Qubā, Musjid-e-Qiblatayn, Abyār Sab'ah (the seven wells) and Mount Uhud – where they filled themselves with Allāh's Favours and Bounties.

Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib – the principal of Madrasah Deoband – intended to remain with his Shaykh, Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib and obtained his permission in this regard. However, Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib and Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib insisted that he should return to India with the caravan because it would have been too difficult to find a person like him to fill his post as principal of Madrasah Deoband. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib sufficiently displayed his confidence in Imām Rabbānī by leaving the decision in his hands. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said to him: "Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad, give me your opinion. Maulwī Rafī' ad-Dīn would like to live with me in Madīnatur Rasūl (the city of Rasūlullāh ﷺ), but his fellow companions insist upon

taking him back with them." Imām Rabbānī replied: "Hadrat, the Madrasah of Deoband fulfils a great *Dīnī* service. It would be very difficult to find a capable person like Maulwī Rafī' ad-Dīn to fill the post as principal of that institution. Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib insisted [on taking him back] so that the Madrasah would not suffer."

Upon hearing this, Shāh Sāhib said: "Yes! If that is the case, it is essential for Maulwī Rafī' ad-Dīn to return to India." Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib said: "Hadrat, do not separate me from yourself. Some other arrangements could be made for the Madrasah." However, Shāh Sāhib did not permit him to remain and said to him: "Bhāi! Serving the *Dīn* is a very great service. It is only the fortunate ones who are blessed with the opportunity of serving the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ. When Allāh ﷻ is accepting a *Dīnī* service from you, it is sinful to disturb it." Hence, after spending about twenty days in Madīnah Munawwarah, the blessed caravan returned to Makkah and remained there peacefully for over a month.

Those who did not have a lot of money, or needed to reach home quickly, boarded a ship and returned home. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and his close associates did not even think of going back as yet. After spending over a month in Makkah, most of them had come close to the end of their finances. They started to engage in private meetings in order to work out a plan to obtain Hadrat's permission to leave. However, no one had the courage to ask him. Anyway, those who managed to muster the courage, could not obtain his permission. The only reply they received was: "If anyone is in a hurry to leave, he may proceed."

Some of the companions who were in need went to A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and related the entire situation to him. They requested him to order Hadrat to return to India because they did not want to go alone and be deprived of his company. A'lā Hadrat accepted

their request and told Hadrat Imām Rabbānī: "Maulānā! I do not desire to be separated from you, but your fellow companions have very little money left. The benefit which the people of India derive from your company is obvious. I consider it appropriate for you to return to India now."

Hadrat had no alternative but to obey A'lā Hadrat's order. He made up his mind to return and preparations for the departure commenced. Coincidentally – on the day they decided to depart, the dreadful news of the conquest of Palauna and its falling into the hands of the Russians reached Makkah. However, there was no way of verifying this news. Their natural sorrow upon hearing this news compounded by the fact that there was no way in which they could verify its authenticity. This made them feel compelled to delay their departure, but A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said: "The avenues of receiving news and information are closing down. This news will not be verified for months. Proceed in Allāh's Name. Whatever was destined to happen has already happened and whatever is destined to happen will certainly be realized."

A'lā Hadrat's beloved travellers bid farewell to him and departed for Jeddah. There was a ship anchored in Jeddah which was about to depart, but it had too little space. Regardless, they proceeded to buy their tickets to board it. They felt that, since they had left Makkah, it would be futile to remain in Jeddah just for the sake of a little more comfort [on another ship]. The ship departed that same night. On the thirteenth day they all reached Bombay safely and proceeded to Gangoh.

Al-hamdu lillāh, the entire journey was completed safely and with ease. However, Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib had fallen ill. It appeared to be a slight illness and was not considered to be worthy of causing any stress to his fellow travellers. However, the illness gradually increased and it eventually led to his death three years later in 1297 A.H.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī returned to Gangoh in 1295 A.H. and continued serving this *Dīn* for which Allāh ﷻ had sent him into this world. He rendered this service by teaching and instructing those who sought guidance. Allāh ﷻ blessed him with another grandchild in Rajab of that same year. He was named Muḥammad Ya'qūb.

The *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ are bound to be tested through trials and tribulations of sorrow in this temporary abode. Different calamities befall them and death afflicts their relatives. None shall remain in this world apart from Allāh ﷻ. Trials and tribulations in this regard commenced. Several of Hadrat's relatives, who had been a source of comfort and happiness to him, passed away. However, there were two major calamities which he had to endure. One was the demise of his maternal uncle, Maulwī 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib, who had fulfilled a fatherly role in his life since the time he was orphaned. The other was the demise of his devoted companion, Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*, with whom he had shared a very deep bond and kinship since his student days and youth – from the time they were eighteen years old up until then.

Both sorrowful incidents occurred in 1297 A.H. No one can estimate the pain which these incidents must have caused to his weak heart. On one occasion, Imām Rabbānī personally related: "I was extremely pained by the separation with Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim. Were it not for one thing, I myself would have died there and then." A *khādim* asked: "Hadrat, what was the one thing?" He replied: "The very thing for which you consider me to be great."

Come, let me now take you on a tour to the room which is known as Hujrah Quddūsī and which was cleaned by Hadrat's blessed hands. Maulānā Ambhetwī [Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad *rahimahullāh*] had pledged *bay'ah* in that very same room. This private room remained Hadrat's '*ibādat khānā* (place of worship) for about fifty years. While performing ṣalāh in this room, he was bitten by an insect or reptile. This eventually led to his demise. This

very room had become the test of *hijrah* (emigration) to him when the *pīr zādah* had disputed with him over its occupation.

THIRD HAJJ

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī made preparations for his second *hajj-e-badal* in 1299 A.H. These plans were made hurriedly and he had very little time. People did not believe that he would make it on time for *hajj*. He departed on the 4th of Dhū al-Qa'dah. It was an era during which the Sultān had imposed a ten day quarantine period on the island of Kāmran. Hājīs who proceeded to Jeddah via Aden thus had to stay over at this place for a period of ten days for the purpose of medical tests.

Most of the *hājīs* from Bombay had already departed and only a few people remained waiting for a ship, hoping to reach Arabia somehow or another. A ship finally arrived and the tickets immediately went on sale. There were only twelve or fourteen days left before *hajj* commenced and, if the ten days of quarantine had to be subtracted, it meant that there were only about four days left. Many people advised Hadrat saying: "It is futile to purchase a ticket to Jeddah. You will not be able to make it on time for *hajj*. Your money will go to waste." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not pay any heed to them. He purchased his ticket and departed.

The ship reached Aden seven days after raising anchor in Bombay. It stopped in Aden for a few hours and turned directly towards the Hijāz. The Jeddah harbour could be seen on the ninth day. The moment the ship dropped anchor, the passengers disembarked, got onto the boats, and reached the shore. Not one of them knew what Kāmran was, or where it was situated.

Without a doubt, it was absolutely necessary for every ship to obey the orders of the powerful Sultanate. No one had the courage to disobey its orders. Granted, this was the first year that the

quarantine had been imposed, but it had been announced to all the countries and it would have been impossible for the captain of any ship to have been oblivious of this fact. However, an 'Unseen Force' was drawing the ship and, acting under the Divine Order of Allāh ﷻ, the ship proceeded directly to the Jeddah harbour. Hence, no one could stop it.

We had heard that, when they were passing Kāmrān and the ship has crossed the boundary, the Turkish officers had waved red flags in an effort to stop the ship from proceeding and had tried to direct it to change its course towards Kāmrān. The captain was informed of his serious crime via Morse code. However, the ship was not destined to turn towards Kāmrān and thus it did not turn in that direction. However, upon its return the ship was fined by the Sultanate for its crime. The quarantine period was doubled to twenty days, and a fine of three hundred thousand rupees had to be paid.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī reached Jeddah safely on the ninth day after his departure from Bombay. Quick arrangements for camels were made. They reached Makkah Mu'azzamah and the hajj commenced the very next day. Hadrat proceeded to Minā and from there to 'Arafāt without any rush and completed the remaining rites and procedures of hajj in absolute comfort and tranquillity. He was also blessed with the opportunity of visiting his Shaykh, A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and remaining in his company for a third time.

On this journey, Hadrat was accompanied by Munshī Tajammul Husayn who was the father-in-law of Hājī Zuhūr Ahmad Sāhib Ambhetwī. He relates: "When Hadrat used to get up during the latter part of the night and occupy himself in *nafl ṣalāh*, I would also get up and join him in the *ṣalāh* as his *muqtadī*. I cannot describe the humility, devotion, and the powerful manner with which he used to recite the Qur'ān. It was as though his life was leaving him and his heart was trembling from within. I said to him

one day: Hadrat, your Qur'ān recitation during the *tahajjud salāh* is something else. It is as though you have a dagger in your hand. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī smiled and said: 'My Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib related his own experience to me once. He said: 'On one occasion during my stay in Delhi, I performed the *jumu'ah salāh*.⁵⁸ When I completed the *salāh*, a person who neither knew me, nor did I know him, got up and departed. While he was walking away, he said: 'Wāh [excellent]! O you who read the Qur'ān. May Allāh ﷻ grant you a long life. You completed the *bherwī* (a tune sung in the morning) today.'"

Another resident of Gangoh had also left to perform *hajj* during that year. Hadrat wanted him to join them because they were from the same village, but he was also of the opinion that Hadrat would not make it on time for the *hajj*. Therefore he rushed and left Gangoh much earlier. By the Power of Allāh, Hadrat did not have to experience the quarantine and he managed to reach Makkah Mu'azzamah safely before the *hajj* commenced, while these unfortunate people had to spend ten days under quarantine in Kāmran. Upon their return, they rushed once again and left Hadrat behind. They happily boarded the same ship in which Hadrat had arrived from Bombay while all the ships stood waiting in line for the passengers, but again they had to stay over in Kāmran under quarantine – only this time it had been lengthened to twenty days. Thus, they had spent an entire month under quarantine. Hadrat neither stopped for the quarantine during his onward journey nor during his return journey.

Hadrat returned from this journey in the year 1300 A.H. and, upon

⁵⁸ The father of the present imām of the Jāmi' Musjid Delhi was the imam of the Jāmi' Musjid at the time [of this incident]. He was Hadrat Shāh Sāhib's *murīd*. He would very often ask his Shaykh to go forward to perform the *salāh*. Seeing the persistencē and desire of the people, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib was forced to go forward.

his arrival, he met his third grand-child, Muḥammad Yūsuf, who had been born on the 28th of Muḥarram.

Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī used to relate: “When I was leaving for ḥajj, Muftī ‘Ināyat Aḥmad Sāhib (the author of *Tārīkh Ḥabīb-e-Ilāh*) was in Bombay. He was leaving with the intention of emigrating to the Ḥaramayn. When he heard of my arrival in Bombay, he came to meet me. We had never met before. He introduced himself and named some of the books which he had written in order to further explain who he was. However, I was just as ignorant about his books as I was of him. Eventually he said: ‘We heard that you are an ‘ālim and that you have a bond with Shāh Walī-ullāh Sāhib’s family. This is why we came to meet you.’ He sat down for a while and departed. When an old man like him makes the effort to personally come to meet me, why should I not go to meet him? Thus, I also went to meet him the following day and we engaged in a lengthy conversation.”

Ḥadrat continues: “The Muftī Sāhib had great love for Shāh Walī-ullāh Sāhib’s family. He used to say: ‘Shāh Walī-ullāh Sāhib’s similitude is like the *tūbā* (a tree in Paradise) whose branches will extend to the homes of every Paradise dweller. The person who does not have a branch of the *tūbā* tree, is not a Paradise dweller.”

Ḥadrat continues: “The Muftī Sāhib and I did not leave on the same ship for Jeddah. The ship upon which Muftī Sāhib had left sank and all the passengers drowned ...

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.”

This was Imām Rabbānī’s last ḥajj. He did not get the opportunity to perform another ḥajj. He remained engrossed in teaching and imparting knowledge. Apart from Aḥādīth, he cut down on teaching

other subjects. He adhered to teaching the *Sihāh*, namely *Bukhārī*, *Muslim*, *Tirmidhī*, *Ibn Mājah*, *Nasa'ī* and *Abū Dā'ūd* in a single year. This is known as *daurah*. This system continued for as long as his eyesight remained.

Together with teaching external knowledge (*zāhirī 'ilm*), his programme of teaching spiritual knowledge (*bā'inī 'ilm*) still continued. However, this increased by the day because, after the demise of *Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī]*, his spiritual children had also started coming to him. *Hadrat* never made any distinction between his own direct associates and *Hadrat Maulānā's murīds*. On one occasion he related a dream: "I dreamt that *Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim* was sitting as a bride and my *nikāh* to him was being performed." *Hadrat* then interpreted it by saying: "After all, I am seeing to his [spiritual] children."

RECTORSHIP OF MADĀRIS

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī appreciated *Dīnī* knowledge immensely. He used to regard this service to Islam and his deputyship to Rasūlullāh ﷺ with utmost respect and considered it to be the foremost means of salvation in the Hereafter. He had a special affinity for students and '*ulamā*' and had an extraordinary love for the *madāris*. His heart would ache whenever he heard of a place where *Dīnī* knowledge was not being appreciated and where the people were attracted towards ignorance and irreligiousness. He would be delighted upon hearing about the proliferation of *Dīnī* knowledge in a certain place – where the people were preoccupied with studying and imparting knowledge. He had a natural inclination towards such people and would shower his attention upon them. His pure tongue and Allāh-engrossed heart would constantly make *du'ā* that this garden of *Dīn*, which had been planted by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, would continue flourishing. Apart from his spiritual bond with the *madāris*, he used to take full part in serving them physically and financially. Whenever there was a need, he would provide his words of advice

and counsel, undertake journeys to rectify situations, make arrangements and deliver lectures.

Due to his love for *Dīn*, he had a natural love for all the *madāris* of India. However, he had an intense love for Madrasah 'Āliyah Islāmīyyah Deoband and Mazāhir al-'Ulūm Sahāranpūr. Both these *madāris* were contemporaries and 'twins' with regard to their construction, and they were brothers with regard to their founders. Madrasah 'Āliyah Deoband enjoys the honour of being the elder of the two. Madrasah 'Āliyah Deoband's foundation was laid in Muharram 1283 A.H., and that of Mazāhir al-'Ulūm Sahāranpūr was laid six months later in Rajab 1283 A.H. The foundations of both *madāris* were laid by Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm *rahimahullāh*.

Divine Will had destined choice, sincere and devoted teachers and trustees for both *madāris* – teachers and trustees who were the pride of the era. The *mudarris-e-awwal* (most senior teacher) of Mazāhir 'Ulūm was Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. Its founder and principal was Maulānā Maulwī Sa'adat 'Alī Sāhib. When he passed away, he was succeeded by Hadrat Maulānā al-Maulwī 'Aḥmad 'Alī Sāhib Muḥaddith *rahimahullāh*. The *mudarris-e-awwal* of Madrasah 'Āliyah Deoband was Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, and the principal was Hadrat Maulānā al-Maulwī Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

The year 1297 A.H. is referred to as '*ām al-ḥuzn*' (the year of grief) in the history of these *madāris*. On Thursday, the 4th of Jumādā ath-Thāniyah of that year, Ma'dīn al-Hasanāt Qāsim al-Khayr wa al-Barakāt Qudwatul Amāthil Zubdatul Afādil Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* passed away in Deoband. He died of asthma at the age of 49. He bid farewell to friends and relatives just after mid-day. It was as though the sun, passing its meridian, was announcing the passing of the 'sun of *Dīn*' whose

brilliant rays are illuminating the world to this day.

During that same year, Hadrat Maulānā Aḥmad ‘Alī Sāhib Muḥaddith Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh*, bid farewell to this world in Sahāranpūr. Both *madāris* became orphans. Both heart-rending incidents caused the land to become constricted despite its vastness, and the bright world to appear dark. It was at this point that Hadrat Qutb al-‘Ālam [Imām Rabbānī] openly turned his attention and focus towards these *madāris*. Prior to this, the attention he accorded them had been hidden and concealed because there was no need for it to be exposed [in the presence of the luminaries who were in charge of them]. Imām Rabbānī’s rectorship of Madrasah Islāmīyyah Deoband was published in its newsletter of 1298 A.H., and his external and internal bond with *umm al-madāris* (the mother of all *madāris*) became known to the world.

Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib passed away in 1302 A.H. and in 1304 A.H., Maulānā Fayḍ al-Hasan Sāhib also passed away. This rendered Mazāhir al-‘Ulūm an orphan from all sides. After the demise of these two luminaries, the external and internal rectorship of Mazāhir al-‘Ulūm’s was also handed over to Imām Rabbānī.

Hadrat had the opportunity of travelling Deoband on numerous occasions. People with insight would consider one of these visits to be worthy of being written in gold ink upon the history pages of Madrasah ‘Āliyah Deoband. I refer to the *jalsah* which Imām Rabbānī had attended in Deoband – known as *jalsah-e-dastārbandī* (graduation ceremony).

Madrasah ‘Āliyah Deoband had held four graduation ceremonies prior to this one. The first *jalsah* was held in 1290 A.H. during which five maulwīs qualified. The second *jalsah* was held in 1292 A.H. Again five maulwīs qualified. The third *jalsah* took place in 1298 A.H. and seven maulwīs qualified. The fourth *jalsah*, in which

eleven maulwīs qualified, was the *jalsah* of Thursday, 14 Rabī' al-Awwal 1301 A.H. This *jalsah* will be remembered forever! I consider it to be essential to provide a short description of that *jalsah* in this biography.

The *madrasah* had given particular attention to this *jalsah-e-dastārbandī*. The weather itself was excellent. Winter had passed and there was only a slight chill in the air. The nights were moonlit. The government office holidays were taken into consideration when the date was decided upon. The date and time of the *jalsah* was determined two months in advance. About two thousand letters and two hundred and fifty posters were printed and sent to most of the cities and towns. In addition to this, hand-written and verbal invitations were extended. In short, no effort was spared in sending out a general message about the forthcoming *jalsah*. Certain special luminaries were informed of the *jalsah*, and they were reminded several times.

It is obvious that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's presence would have been greatly valued and appreciated at such an occasion. His anticipated presence at the *jalsah-e-dastārbandī* of the *madrasah* in Deoband was considered a great boon and was obviously the cause of much anxiety [as to whether he would attend or not]. Over two thousand guests, including the general population as well as the 'ulamā', arrived at the *jalsah*. Hadrat Maulānā was the first to arrive. The foundation for the *jalsah* was laid the moment he and his students arrived from Gangoh. In fact, we ought to say that the *jalsah* was the body and Hadrat was its soul. After his arrival, guests from other areas started to arrive in groups upon groups. They arrived as eagerly as thirsty people would line up to receive water.

Praise is due to the residents of Deoband who hosted this large *jalsah*. It had been impossible to ascertain the exact number of guests beforehand. They hosted the guests with the kind of open-

heartedness that would have been a source of pride to the rulers as well. These sincere and religious people considered this function to be more important than their own wedding functions and, seeing as they considered these *Dīnī* guests to be more beloved than their own guests, they displayed absolute humility and courteousness towards them.

On one of the nights, a large group of guests arrived. All these guests, together with several hundred residents of the town, were hosted by Hakīm Mushtāq Ahmad Sāhib – the officer in charge (mayor) of Deoband. The excellence of his arrangements can be gauged by the fact that all the guests were hosted until ten o'clock that night. Not a single one of them complained that they did not receive water when they asked for it, or that they had to wait for it.

After the *fajr salāh*, the gathering commenced in the new building where the *madrasah* is currently situated. It continued until eight o'clock. The *mudarris-e-awwal* of the *madrasah*, Hadrat Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, stood on the podium and delivered an inspiring talk in which he related the affairs of the *madrasah* in a concise manner. He outlined the income and expenditure, as well as the amount which was needed for the new building which was in the process of being built. This building was being built on the foundation which was laid by Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib rahimahullāh in 1293 A.H. Construction of this building had been in progress for eight years and it was being built according to the Divinely-inspired plans which had been drawn up by Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib. An amount of twenty-two thousand five hundred rupees had been spent up until the point when the building was being prepared for that specific *jalsah*.

When he completed his talk, Hadrat Maulānā descended the podium, took the graduation turbans and placed them in front of Imām Rabbānī. Quṭb al-'Ālam Muḥaddith Gangohī rahimahullāh

stood up, tied the turbans around the heads of each graduate with his blessed hands, and uttered words of advice to each graduate individually. This *jalsah* was the last *jalsah-e-dastārbandī* of the *madrasah* in Deoband. Thousands of students have qualified thereafter, but the custom of *dastārbandī* was never practised again.

The eleven '*ulamā*' who graduated that year were most fortunate to have Qutb al-'Ālam tying the turbans around their heads. What a privilege to have Imām Rabbānī placing his hand upon their heads! The eleven '*ulamā*' who graduated on this blessed and famous occasion were as follows:

(1) Hakīm al-Ummah Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī, (2) Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Maulwī 'Alā' ad-Dīn Sāhib Nānautwī, (3) Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī, (4) Janāb Maulānā Hāfiz Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī, (5) my *ustād* and my master, Maulānā al-Maulwī 'Abd al-Mu'min Sāhib Deobandī, (6) Janāb Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Nāzīr Hasan Sāhib Deobandī — the *mudarris-e-awwal* at *Madrasah Chahtārī*, (7) al-Maulwī Muḥammad Siddīq Sāhib Deobandī,⁵⁹ (8) Janāb Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Deobandī, (9) Janāb al-Hāfiz al-Maulwī Qādī Nuṣratuddīn Sāhib Nagīnwī, (10) Maulānā al-Maulwī Muḥammad Murtaḍā Sāhib Dehlawī, and (11) Maulānā al-Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Murādābādī.

Shaykh Nihāl Aḥmad Sāhib — a senior leader of Deoband — presented shawls to Hadrat Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb

⁵⁹ As per the Hadīth, "Allāh ﷻ is not ashamed of the truth", I feel it necessary to mention that Maulwī Muḥammad Siddīq Sāhib later became inclined towards *bid'āt* and his views deviated from the views of Hadrat. Allāh ﷻ Alone is the guide and our trust is in Him Alone. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

Sāhib, the *mudarris-e-awwal* and to Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib – the principal of the *madrasah*. Thereafter the majority of the attendees made cash donations towards the *madrasah*, which totalled one thousand and fifty-seven rupees and twelve *ānās*.

At the end of the *dastārbandī*, all the guests were invited to partake in a meal which was provided by the *madrasah*. Several thousand guests were fed with great relish and, through the Blessings bestowed by Allāh ﷻ, some food was still left over. The *jalsah* ended with great success. Some of the guests returned home that same day, while many remained longer. They continued to be hosted by the *madrasah* and the residents of the city. Solely by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, '*ulamā*' – who were normally assumed to be reclusive in the *masājid* – were able to host several thousand guests and see to their needs in a systematic and methodical manner. This was a feat which could not even have been accomplished by the affluent. Seniors, juniors, familiar people, strangers – not one of them had a single complaint that they did not have access to a water jug, a bed, or anything else for that matter.

The day after the *jalsah* was a Friday. Many of the guests approached Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and requested him to deliver a lecture and bless them with his words of advice. Hadrat initially refused, saying: "I do not know how to deliver a lecture. This position belonged to Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib." However, Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib and Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib expressed their intense desire that Hadrat should deliver a talk and said to him: "Our hearts really desire that you should deliver a talk." Hadrat replied: "If your hearts really desire this, I will say whatever little I know." He acceded to their request and delivered a lecture in the Jāmi' Musjid after the *juṃ'u'ah salāh*.

What can we say about his talk? It was a manifestation of the Arabic saying:

وإن من البيان لسحرا

"Some speeches are as captivating as magic."

Hadrat's talk was a surging ocean of love for Allāh ﷻ. Waves were constantly rolling from one shore to the other and it changed the condition of every single person – big and small. Hadrat took a book of Hadīth in his hand and sat down on the podium. He then opened the book and, wherever his eyes fell, he read a Hadīth and translated it. His entire lecture consisted of a very simple translation of the Ahādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ which contained the rules and regulations regarding ṣalāh and fasting – something which any ordinary person who had studied even a little would have been able to do. But Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what the 'Unseen Power' was that caused the entire assembly to remain absolutely silent, stunned and amazed. Every person was affected by this spiritual bestowal. Even the walls of the Musjid appeared to be in a trance.

The principal of the *madrasah*, Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib, described the lecture in his annual newsletter in the following words: "What an excellent lecture it was! It was as though he was making the listeners drink the drink of Allāh's Love. The floors and walls were also in a trance. A strange condition – which was never seen or heard before – pervaded the assembly. Allāh! Allāh! What a great impact is contained in the simple words, straightforward talks and free flowing tongues of the special servants of Allāh ﷻ! Let alone humans – even the trees and the rocks will accept such words.

The Maulānā did not explain any intricate academic topics. He merely explained the simple rulings of *wudū'* and *ṣalāh*. At one point, when he was talking about sincerity, he said the word '*Allāh*' in a loud voice.

I do not know with what heart, and with what pain he took Allāh's Name, but it reduced the entire assembly to tears and sobbing and the whole Musjid reverberated with the sound. Each person was examining his inner self. Some people looked up towards the

Maulānā and saw him sitting silently on the podium with absolute dignity, looking attentively at the assembly. I am certain that if the Maulānā did not look at the assembly in this way, they would have remained in that state for a long time. He, himself, remained totally calm and collected.”

A full description of this blessed assembly can only be obtained from the fortunate people who had witnessed it and whose ears had heard the heart-rending talk. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had taken Allāh’s Blessed Name, every single person was affected by it. Most of them were overcome by emotion and cried profusely, while many were left trembling. Every single person’s heart was affected, but no one knew for what reason Allāh’s Name had been taken.

I heard that, before the lecture could commence, people were sitting around and discussing the lectures of different orators and the impact which these orators have on their audience. Some orators have the unique power of being able to reduce their audience to tears, or to make them laugh whenever they wished. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī also heard these conversations. In order to change the direction of these conversations, he made the following statement and remained silent: “The servants of Allāh ﷻ do not consider this to be of any importance. What is so good about reducing a person to tears or making him laugh? If just the Name of Allāh ﷻ is uttered with sincerity, it can cause the entire creation to weep.”

A short while later, this very statement – which was on the level of *'ilm al-yaqīn* (knowledge of certainty) – was turned into *'ayn al-yaqīn* (the sight of certainty, an eye-witness account) and several thousand people learnt the very essence of sincerity and devotion. What we know as ‘senses’ could only be experienced by the audience after the *'asr salāh*. As for before the *'asr salāh* ... every person appeared to be in a daze, affected by some ‘Unseen Power’.

Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Sāhib Ilāhabādī was also present in

this gathering. This Maulwī Sāhib changed later in his life. He became inclined towards music and *simā'* (singing). He passed away while engrossed in *simā'* during an 'urs in Ajmer. However, he always spoke in praise of Hadrat and his piety. At the time of this incident, he had actually become a devoted *khādim* of Hadrat. When he returned to Ilāhabād, he used to relate to the people: "I never saw or heard of such a condition before. Just once, I read a Hadīth which described how Hadrat Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was overcome by such a condition when Jibra'il عليه السلام came onto the Ka'bah and took the Name of Allāh سبحانه. During this *jalsah*, Sayyidunā Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib has made me see this with my own eyes and caused my heart to experience its joy."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī remained in Deoband for a few days after which he returned to Gangoh via Sahāranpūr. The *madrasah* of Sahāranpūr – Mazāhir al-'Ulūm – was equal and similar to Madrasah 'Āliyah Deoband. Since its inception, it was run under the sponsorship and protection of sincere and devoted servants of Allāh سبحانه. It was almost eighteen years old at that time, and its nineteenth year was to commence within two months. Many students had qualified there during this eighteen year period. After completing the *Nizāmī* syllabus, they had spread to different places and countries.

The people of Sahāranpūr had, up until this point, paid no attention whatsoever to a *jalsah-e-dastārbandī*, and thus no *jalsah* had ever been held there. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī stopped over in Sahāranpūr upon his return from Deoband, Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib expressed his desire that Hadrat should tie the graduation turbans for two students who had recently qualified. Hadrat accepted the request gladly and, after the *jumu'ah* ṣalāh, he tied the turbans with his blessed hands around the heads of Janāb Maulānā Maulwī Fakhr ad-Dīn Sāhib Gangohī and Maulānā Hāfiz Muḥammad Jān Sāhib Punjābī, who is presently [at the time of writing this book] a judge in Tonk. Within a week, the *jalsah-e-*

dastārbandī was held at both *madāris* and fulfilled in an excellent and well-organized manner. Thereafter Qutb al-‘Ālam returned to Gangoh.

Al-hamdulillāh, we have come to the conclusion of the first volume which contains topics that are mainly related to the Sharī‘ah. I request your *du‘ā* for the second volume which will contain topics related to the *tarīqah* and associated matters and we hope to have it printed soon.

I now seek your leave. However, I would like to advise you that – if you have the desire to learn the real essence of *sulūk* and *taṣawwuf* – you should study the book *Tablīgh-e-Dīn* which is a simple Urdu translation of Imām Ghazzālī’s book, *Arba‘īn*. After reading this book with concentration, you will be able to personally acknowledge the change which it has brought about in you. Thereafter, the enjoyment which you will experience upon reading volume two [of *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī’s biography] will, *inshā Allāh*, show you the path towards reaching Allāh ﷻ – the path which not only you, but every Muslim desires and is in search of.

If you would like to learn about spiritual ailments and, after identifying them, receive the cure, then you should certainly study this book.

Was salām.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TARĪQAH

اللهم أنت المعبود، أنت المسجود، صاحب الفيض والجود، لا إله إلا أنت، لا شريك لك، لا أحصي ثناء عليك أنت كما أثنيت على نفسك، اللهم أنت نور السماوات والأرض ومن فيهن، إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين، إن لقائك حق ونبيك سيدنا ومولانا محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم حق وكل ما جاء به من عندك حق لا ريب فيه ولا مرأى، ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم، اللهم نور قلوبنا واستر عيوبنا وامح ذنوبنا ولا تكشف عوراتنا واشف عاهاتنا واغفر خطايا وسينئاتنا إنك أنت الغفور الرحيم، أما بعد.

*Know the conditions of a Shaykh
[before you take him as] your guide on the path.
Choose a Shaykh, and regard him to be the path.
Make him your own
and let him be your companion on this journey.*

*This is a road of difficulty, calamity, hardship and danger.
Whoever desires to travel this road alone ...
[he] will not reach his destination,
except with the assistance and guidance of a Shaykh.
[This is a] road which you have never seen or been aware of.
So beware! Never travel upon it alone,
and do not look away from your guide.*

*If the Shaykh's shadow (protection) is not over you
then the voices of thieves (highway robbers) will mislead you.*

*An intelligent person brings himself
under the shadow of the Shaykh
and joins his caravan (so that he may be safeguarded).*

*The shadow of the Shaykh is like a strong mountain.
The soul of the Shaykh is like the guardian eagle of that mountain.
He is a sun (giving light and guidance)
in the appearance of a human.
Understand this well!
And Allāh knows best.*

I, 'Āshiq Ilāhī, declare with all my heart to the *ahl al-haqq* that I am absolutely useless. That is why, upon completion of the first volume of *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*, I spent several weeks at a loss, worried about whether I should start the second volume or not. My lack of knowledge and inability inclined me towards not writing anything. However, those spiritual elders – whose internal spiritual strength and spiritual bestowal enabled me to complete the first volume – imposed the importance of commencing the second volume upon me and instructed me to do so. I now present to you whatever I have heard from reliable sources. May Allāh ﷻ make this book a means of guidance to mankind, rectification of our spiritual condition, a treasure for me in the Hereafter and a means of gaining Allāh's Pleasure through the sanctity of the leader of the Prophets and Messengers – Muḥammad ﷺ. Āmīn.

Sulūk refers to *تعمير الظاهر والباطن* – to keep the outward body parts and the heart occupied in the obedience and service of Allāh ﷻ. In other words, becoming used to following the Sharī'ah in the manner displayed and taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to such an extent that practising upon the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ becomes one's second nature and natural trait – without any need to resort to formalities.

With regard to his internal and external self, Rasūlullāh ﷺ is obviously the most balanced human being amongst the entire

creation. All his movements – known as his habits (Sunnah) – were on a level of absolute balance and, if emulated by anyone, it can bring about complete balance within his heart. The limbs have a special connection with the heart. Thus, if a Muslim endeavours to be constantly vigilant in his emulation of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – not only in his worship, but also in his habits – then his limbs will develop a balance and all negligence will end. This emulation will have a constant effect upon the heart, until the heart, which is the essence of the human body, will start to detest evil traits and qualities and become imbibed with excellent qualities – thus becoming balanced. This balance (*i'tidāl*) is known as *nisbat* and every sincere Muslim should be in quest thereof.

When the heart acquires balance and equilibrium, it starts experiencing joy in all acts of obedience and develops a hatred towards acts of disobedience. The person then has a natural desire to perform acts of worship and cannot tolerate doing anything which causes Allāh's Displeasure. He then possesses a special light in his heart which enables him to differentiate between obedience and disobedience and not to be confused regarding the difference in the least. The *nafs* (soul), which had caused him to become used to total engrossment in worldly pleasures and which had attracted him towards fulfilling temporary desires, now gradually becomes weaker. His habits change and are slowly transformed until his heart experiences an overwhelming sweetness in the Unseen – a sweetness that cannot be compared to the most enjoyable bounty of this world. He develops a total attraction towards the *dhikr wa fikr* (remembrance and pondering) of Allāh ﷻ. His heart cannot tolerate being parted from this [*dhikr wa fikr*]. If this had to be taken away from him, his sorrow and grief would be far greater than if he were to lose his life, wealth, family, honour, and everything else he possessed.

Tasawwuf is the essence of *īmān*. It is not something superfluous. The very same *īmān*, which every Muslim claims to have, is the

essence of *sulūk* – provided its reality and sweetness has been bestowed upon the heart. The Sharī'ah, as taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to the entire world, is the source of *sulūk* and *ṭarīqah*. However, this will only be possible when it is conveyed from the limbs to the heart. If this happens, spiritual action and spiritual reward becomes the fruit of that affinity and bond.

A sick person, who experiences no hunger at all, acts under the orders of a doctor and forces himself to eat something in order to gain strength. This action assists him to remove the illness, or at least to make it bearable. On the other hand, you get another person who, while he is well and enjoying good health, is able to eat any type of food whenever he desires. Without a doubt, the continued existence of both these people is dependent on food and the food is of benefit to both. Outwardly there appears to be no difference between the two, because food – which is the basis for survival in this worldly life – has become the nourishment of both and is used by both. In reality, however, there is a major internal difference between the two. The sick person has subjugated his natural disposition to the food, while the healthy person has subjugated the food to his natural disposition.

In the same way, when an ordinary person engages in '*ibādah* (worship), he does it by subjugating his *nafs*. However, when a *ṣāhib-e-nisbat walī* (a pious servant of Allāh who enjoys close proximity to Allāh ﷻ) engages in the same '*ibādah*, he does it because his heart has imposed upon him the desire to become engrossed in it.

The sick person would not have experienced the slightest hesitance in refraining from eating the food if it were not for the fact that the doctor had compelled him to do so. Equally, if he had not bothered to act according to the doctor's orders, his heart would not have felt any need to eat. Although he would have had to suffer weakness at some point in future due to his disobedience, staying away from

food at that moment would have given him joy. On the other hand, if the healthy person were to be deprived of his food, his discomfort and depression would increase at every moment. He would experience a scraping feeling in the pit of his stomach and, for as long as he is deprived of his food, he would not be able to concentrate fully in whatever else he may be doing. This complete wellbeing and state of health is known as *tarīqah*. Once it is acquired by the heart, the heart develops a sincere desire for the spiritual nourishment which is known as the Sharī'ah.

The human heart is a mirror which has the ability to reflect the *tajalliyāt* (Manifestations and Splendour) of Allāh ﷻ. It is necessary to polish this mirror [heart] and keep it shining in order to display this capability and practical condition. It must, of necessity, be placed before Allāh ﷻ in a such a manner that it is prevented from turning its direction and focus away from Allāh ﷻ. The heart is polished through courage and striving (*mujāhadah*). The dirt, grime and darkness of sin, bad character and evil habits constantly makes an effort to remove and obliterate this polish. When this dust and grime is removed, the heart is kept occupied in constant *dhikr wa fikr* (remembrance and reflection) and efforts are made to keep it in the constant Presence of Allāh ﷻ. Placing it before Allāh ﷻ in this manner, results in it having a reflection which is beyond description and comparison. When this single mirror is illuminated by the Source of All Light [Allāh ﷻ], it is sufficient to illuminate the entire world which is plunged in darkness.

This was the light with which Rasūlullāh's ﷺ blessed heart had entered into this world. It had illuminated all corners of the world. This light was transferred unto others and it has reflected from the polished hearts of every era. Thus it has continued spreading the light of guidance in every era. Lamps, which have been illuminated by the light of prophethood, are present in this world today – even after the passage of one thousand four hundred years – and they will remain until the Resurrection. The bearers of this Holy Light

are known as the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ. They number hundreds of thousands in the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ. This is a biography of one senior member of this sanctified group whose most pleasurable and gratifying blessed name is Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad *rahimahullāh*. He was the *Qutb al-irshād* (a star of guidance) of his era.

اللهم ارفع درجته واحشرنا في زمرة

“O Allāh! Elevate his rank and resurrect us with him.”

The purpose for the above explanation of the nature of *taṣawwuf* is to demonstrate to the reader that the pure Sharī'ah is the prelude and starting point of *taṣawwuf* and that this clear *ṭarīqah* is the end and final destination of *sulūk* – هو الأول والآخر – He (Allāh ﷻ) is the *First and the Last*.

The sincere seeker of *wuṣūl ilallāh* (reaching Allāh ﷻ) will, first of all, compel his limbs and body parts to go against his *nafs* and force it to adhere to the Sharī'ah. In other words, he will abandon his desires, even if his *nafs* should dislike it. He will fulfil acts of obedience, even if it should feel more difficult than carrying a mountain. He will continue in this way until he gets into the habit of following the Sharī'ah. The waywardness of the heart will be removed. He will forcefully repel the thoughts and intentions of disobedience and refuse to allow such evil thoughts to blemish his heart. He will then keep this polished heart occupied in constant *dhikr wa fikr* (remembrance and reflection) and adhere to fulfilling the Orders of Allāh ﷻ. The reflection of the Manifestations and Splendour [of Allāh ﷻ] which he will experience at such a time, as well as the comfort, joy, bond and affinity with which he will follow the Sharī'ah by virtue of this light, glitter, sweetness and enjoyment which he will experience, will now be called *ṭarīqah* and *wilāyat*. It is generally impossible to lose this once it has been acquired. The firmness and steadfastness which will develop in his

obedience to the Sharī'ah is the eternal treasure for which this universe had been created and which Allāh ﷻ had expressed in these words:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I created jinn and man solely for My worship."

Its acquisition is ordered by these words:

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

*"Continue worshipping your Lord
until the inevitable certainty [death] comes to you."*

The greatest of *kashf* (expositions) and *karāmāt* (miracles) are absolutely insignificant in the face of this steadfastness. The *Ahlullāh* refer to it [steadfastness] as فوق الكرامة – and it thus surpasses *karāmat*. Lives are lost and sacrificed in quest of this kind of steadfastness. Adhering unwaveringly to it and losing oneself in it with madness and intoxication, is a type of madness which is praiseworthy. It is a type of madness for which thousands of lives may be sacrificed, and it should be the greatest objective of one's entire life and intellect.

*O reformed heart! You are better than the essence of red roses.
If a person has great wealth, he becomes like Qārūn.¹*

*In the path of desiring the Beloved is great danger
[and] the first step is to become Majnūn.*

¹ *Qārūn* was from the Banī Isrā'īl (Jews). He was a powerful and wealthy minister of Fir'oun at the time of Mūsa ﷺ. His wealth and power intoxicated him to such an extent that he opposed Mūsa ﷺ and he was destroyed. Allāh ﷻ caused him to be sucked into the earth.

The condition of the heart — wherein following the Sharī'ah is naturally desired — can be referred to as *istiqāmat* (steadfastness). In this condition one is able to experience the Presence of Allāh ﷻ to such an extent that one does not experience the slightest whispering and thought of anything other than Allāh ﷻ. This is called *itmīnān* (tranquillity) and is a condition that is Divinely Bestowed. Allāh ﷻ bestows this upon whomever He Wills:

وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

*"The one who is endowed with wisdom
has truly been endowed with immense good."*

Obviously, just as every gift of the Noble King [Allāh ﷻ] in this materialistic world is dependent upon earning and seeking, the acquisition of the essence of this objective is outwardly confined to the system known as *bay'ah*. The *mashā'ikh* (spiritual guides and teachers) are the instruments through which this spiritual training, reformation of one's personality, and cultivation of one's character takes place. When a person becomes occupied in this spiritual training and reformation, he becomes hopeful of acquiring this condition [described in the previous paragraph]. It is then the Master's prerogative to show Kindness to whichever hopeful person He Wills and to bestow it upon him in whichever degree He considers suitable.

The guide of this world, Rasūlullāh ﷺ says: *"There is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is unsound, the entire body will be unsound. Take heed! It is the heart."*

In essence, the rectification of the heart causes the rest of the body parts to become refined and corrected. Since the heart has no desire other than the acquisition of Allāh's Pleasure, the body parts will also confine themselves to acquiring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. This

can only be achieved when one is following the Sharī'ah as was taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The person thus moves beyond the performance of merely the essential acts of worship (*fardh*) and occupies himself in optional acts of obedience – *nawāfil* – as well as voluntary acts of worship. He considers it of vital importance to follow the habits of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and thus he becomes the embodiment of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, emulating him in every aspect. He understands that, due to his balanced heart and upright condition, every habit and human need which the Messenger ﷺ possessed, was filled with benefit and goodness, and thus he strives to emulate it. Acquiring a balanced heart and the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ is confined to this [emulation]. It is impossible to acquire it via any other route.

*A person who goes against the way of the true Nabi ﷺ
will never find the path to his destination.*

The seeker now becomes unconcerned about whether the creation is pleased or displeased with him. He does not even bother about the objections and criticism of the short-sighted and blind public. He becomes totally resolute and unwavering in his quest. The most bitter opposition cannot stop him from reaching his objectives. Worldly calamities and miseries, the death and birth of fellow human beings, their joyous and sad occasions – nothing can bring about a change in his objectives. Time – with all its ups and downs and changes will constantly remain in flux, but regardless, the lush green tree of the seeker's steadfastness will continue to produce its fruit by day and night.

*Even though a long time has passed,
still you regard yourself as safe ...
while you are filled with impurity.*

The desires of the *nafs* forever attempts to overpower man, and seeks to enjoy immediate benefits [instead of waiting for the benefits of the Hereafter]. This onslaught has blackened and

corrupted the heart of man. The true seekers therefore feel compelled to hold onto the hands of the spiritual guides and to bear the numerous difficulties that accompany the rectification of their *nafs*. In their efforts to subdue their *nafs* they have to endure difficult hardships.

The *mashā'ikh*, who possessed cultured and upright hearts, then needed to resort to spoken words of advice and, in order to rectify and reform them, they needed to turn the attention of their own hearts towards the hearts of the seekers of proximity to Allāh ﷻ. These seekers had to be reprimanded at every step. Their every action and movement needed to be observed. They had to make their tongues used to the sweetness of *dhikr* and they needed to make their hands and legs taste the joy of serving Allāh ﷻ. They had to make their rusty hearts taste the sweetness of reflection and meditation. The *mashā'ikh* needed to instil a unity of purpose and concentration into the hearts of the seekers, and then they had to cast the brilliant light of their own hearts into the dense, dark hearts of the seekers in order to reduce its darkness. Gradually, the *mashā'ikh* needed to make them accustomed to light. Only then, could they turn the hearts of these seekers into brilliant stars and shining moons.

Apart from guiding and teaching them during the course of this gradual reformation, the spiritual guides also have to test and examine them at every step. As an expert in this field, the teacher of this spiritual knowledge automatically knows the methodology he needs to adopt when teaching the seeker. The essence of his education is the purification of the heart – removing all evil characteristics, foremost amongst them being pride and haughtiness – and embellishing it with only good characteristics, foremost amongst them being honesty and sincerity.

Allāh's ﷻ Creation has been created with different temperaments. The capability and potential of one person is different from that of

another. Allāh ﷻ did not reserve His Special Favour for anyone in particular. Consequently, there have been many fortunate servants of Allāh ﷻ who did not need to spend a lengthy period in order to acquire this difficult education and passing its tricky examination. Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmād Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was from among these angelic personalities whose spiritual training and education was very short.

In volume one we related how he had remained in the service of his Shaykh, A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for a mere forty days and how, upon his departure for his hometown on the forty-first day, the Shaykh al-'Arab wal 'Ajam had awarded him with a 'certificate of achievement' and had given him permission to accept *bay'ah*. During these forty days he was put through an examination. He was tested and his heart was examined to see whether any taint of haughtiness had remained in it.

On one occasion Hadrat related: "After a few days had passed during my stay in Thānabhawan, my self-respect did not permit me to continue burdening A'lā Hadrat with the provision of my meals. It was difficult for me to make alternate arrangements. Therefore I sought A'lā Hadrat's permission to leave. Hadrat refused to give me leave and said: 'Stay for a few more days.' I remained silent. I decided to stay but, at the same time, I thought to myself that I should make some alternate arrangements for my food. When A'lā Hadrat was about to go to his house, he realized what was going through my mind and said: 'Miyā Rashīd Ahmād! Do not worry about the food, you must join me in my meals.' The lunch which arrived from his house on that day comprised of *koflahs* (minced meat balls) and looked very delicious. A simple gravy accompanied it in a separate utensil. A'lā Hadrat seated me at the *dastarkhwān* (table mat). He placed the bowl of *koflahs* away from me and near to him. The simple gravy he placed near me and I commenced eating with my Hadrat. Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib entered a short while later. Upon seeing that the *koflah* had been placed far away

from me, he remarked: 'Bhāi Sāhib! It is difficult for Rashīd Aḥmad to stretch his hand so far. Why don't you keep the bowl on this side?' A'lā Ḥadrat replied spontaneously: 'He is fortunate enough that I am allowing him to eat with me. I had actually wanted to merely place some *rotī* (flat round bread) in his hand – as we give to the sweepers and cobblers.' While saying these words, A'lā Ḥadrat was watching my face to see if it changed expression. *Al-hamdu lillāh* – these words did not even affect my heart. I was thinking to myself: 'A'lā Ḥadrat is absolutely right in whatever he is saying. Is it a small bounty to receive just *rotī* from this noble court? No matter what I receive, it is an enormous act of kindness.' Ḥadrat never tested me again." Imām Rabbānī then said: "This is why I do not know anything."

On one occasion Ḥadrat had to go to Nānautā or Rāmpūr. It was wintertime and early morning. He was seated, wrapped in a thick double shawl. Janāb Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib and Janāb Ḥakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib were seated on either side of him. A person came, offered *salām*, and shook hands with the two who were seated on either side of him, but did not do the same to our Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī. He had assumed him to be an ordinary lay person although he was seated at the centre of the two. Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, who was Imām Rabbānī's teacher's son, was on very informal terms with Ḥadrat and started smiling. Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī realized the reason for his smile and said: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, I do not wish for people to shake hands with me."

Ḥadrat's heart had a strong bond with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and a strong understanding of affinity and love. We can neither fathom this bond, nor can we ever describe it. It would be difficult to find another person who had such a high a level of love for the Sharī'ah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ amongst his contemporaries. His habits and every aspect of his conduct and appearance provided onlookers with a practical demonstration of the Sharī'ah. He disliked a single

footstep of his to be against the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Obtaining the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ was his highest aspiration and he considered total emulation of the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to be the basis for acquiring that Pleasure. That is why all his moments of activity and inactivity were moulded according to the mould of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

As for *bid'ah* (innovations) ... he preferred to be hard and firm against its perpetrators. This was the fruit of the natural abhorrence which his heart possessed towards deviation and it was the result of his intense love for the Sunnah. His adherence to the Sharī'ah had compelled his heart to such an extent that, even if he tried, he could not restrain himself upon seeing anyone acting against the Sharī'ah in any way.

On one occasion he exited the Musjid after performing the *ishrāq salāh*. Contrary to his habit, he covered his face with a sheet and lay down. A wedding party had arrived in Gangoh from Karnāl the previous day and dancing women were also brought along. Some members of the wedding party knew Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, and thus they went to meet him that morning. They saw Hadrat lying down with a sheet covering his face. They remained seated for quite some time, but Hadrat did not uncover his face. Eventually one of them said: "Hadrat, we came to visit you." Without uncovering his face, Hadrat replied angrily: "What have you come to visit me for?" An old grey-bearded man amongst them realized that the dancing women they had brought with them was the cause of this deprivation [of meeting Hadrat]. He tried to apologize by saying: "Hadrat, we did not bring the dancing women. It is the girl's family who brought them." Hadrat responded: "Miyā! The girl's family is nobody's Allāh that you have to listen to them!" This reply had a remarkable impact on all those who were present. After they departed, Hadrat uncovered his face and got up.

Hadrat was unable to stop the 'urs which used to be held for his

forefather, Hadrat 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. Whenever this 'urs was held, it caused him great pain. It was difficult for him to bear it patiently, and it was a major effort for him to restrain himself. In the beginning, he used to leave Gangoh during the days of the 'urs and go to Rāmpūr. Later on, when he was granted the ability to bear this discomfort, he would remain in Gangoh but he would confine himself to his *khānqāh*. He could not tolerate it if his associates came to meet him during those days. He would become very angry and abstain from speaking to them.

Janāb Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Sālih was very anxious to meet Hadrat and had left his house for this purpose. Coincidentally, it was the time of the 'urs – a fact which he was unaware of. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was compelled by his heart – a heart which was totally devoted to the Sunnah – and could not even ask him about his well-being. He could not welcome him or host him. Apart from replying to his *salām*, Hadrat did not ask him whether he had eaten anything, when he had arrived, or what the purpose of his visit was. Maulwī Muḥammad Sālih spent two days in this manner with Hadrat turning away from him. He alone knows how heavily this must have weighed upon him. He tried to figure out the reason for Hadrat's attitude towards him, but could not understand it. He would sit in front of Hadrat, remain seated silently, and return sorrowfully. When he could bear this no longer, he approached Hadrat, cried before him and asked: "Hadrat, what have I done that you are punishing me in this way? I cannot bear this any longer. For Allāh's Sake, forgive me." Hadrat then took his hand in his own and said: "You did not commit any wrong against me for which I have to forgive you. On the contrary, you have committed a wrong against Allāh ﷻ. Ask Him for forgiveness."

Maulwī Muḥammad Sālih says that he then realized that it had been his arrival in Gangoh during the days of the 'urs which had displeased Hadrat. He apologized to him saying: "Hadrat, Allāh ﷻ is witness – from the very beginning I have had no inclination

whatsoever towards 'urs and other associated customs. By Allāh, I did not come to Gangoh with this in mind, nor did I have any prior knowledge that it was being celebrated at present." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "Although it was not your intention to take any part in the 'urs, the road upon which you were walking was being walked upon by two others who were going for the 'urs, and Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَنْ كَثَّرَ سَوَادَ قَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

'The person who increases the numbers of a people is included amongst them.'"

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's essential merit was connected to his heart and cannot be expressed through words. Anything we may write or say in this regard would merely be an indication of his profound internal condition – and a very weak indication at that. Senior and erudite *mashā'ikh* could not fathom the depths of his spirituality – let alone a novice like me. The extent of his engrossment in his quest to obtain the Pleasure and Love of Allāh ﷻ was such that he would wear out his life in obedience to Him at every available opportunity. In his emulation of the Sharī'ah and abhorrence of *bid'ah* he had to bear a lot of criticism and many accusations from his opposition. However, he considered this to be the realization of his objective and purpose. Why, then, would he ever bother or think about such criticism and accusations?

He considered the revival of forgotten Sunnahs to be his duty and felt that it was his responsibility to draw the attention of the people to it. This is in reality an intrinsic part of the Sharī'ah – though people are unaware of it, ignorant of it, or lazy and neglectful with regard to it. The heart is the ruler and the rest of the body parts are its subjects and employees. By virtue of having spent forty days in the 'Imdādīyyah court' of Thānabhawan, his heart had been illuminated – as bright as the sun – by the lamp of prophethood.

From head to toe, every part of his body had been perfectly cultured and firmly bound to the unadulterated Sharī'ah. The Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ had attached him to it firmly. Hence, he could not be swayed to any side. His heart – having witnessed the Beauty of Allāh ﷻ – had become aloof to the attractions of this world. All his body parts had become dedicated to striving for Allāh's Pleasure. His heart had become a treasure-trove of Allāh's True Love. Every part of his body had become ardently desirous of striving for Allāh's Pleasure and serving Islam, to the extent that it had become his natural habit to follow the Sharī'ah, as was brought by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Since there was nothing he loved more than the Sunnah, it brought him pleasure beyond description to practise upon it. Allāh's ﷻ Grace always assisted and supported him. Divine Inspiration (*taufīq*) had become his back-bone. Rectitude had become his strength. Peace and tranquillity of the heart had been placed upon his shoulders. The crown of steadfastness and fortitude had been placed upon his head. A true quest and sincere desire for the eternal life of the Hereafter had become his shade – shading him against the ups and downs of life, as though they never existed.

I was fortunate enough to come across a page containing notes on the essence and fundamentals of the *ṭarīqah*. It was in the possession of Hadrat's son, Hakīm Maulānā Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib, and had been personally written by Hadrat's blessed hand. Hadrat had written it during his early days and Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what had compelled him to write it.

I present it to the reader as follows:

علم الصوفية علم الدين ظاهرا وباطنا، وقوة اليقين. وهو العلم الأعلى. حالهم إصلاح الأخلاق ودوام الافتقار إلى الله تعالى. حقيقة التصوف التخلق بأخلاق الله تعالى وسلب الإرادة وكون العبد في رضا الله تعالى. أخلاق الصوفية ما هو خلقه عليه السلام بقوله إنك لعلی خلق عظیم. وما ورد به الحديث وتفصيل أخلاقهم هكذا: (١) التواضع ضده الكبر، (٢) المداراة

واحتمال الأذى عن الخلق، (٣) المعاملة برفق وخلق حسن وترك غضب وغيظ، (٤) المواساة والإيثار بفرط الشفقة على الخلق وهو تقدم حقوق الخلق على حظوظه، (٥) السخاوة، (٦) التجاوز والعفو، (٧) طلاقة الوجه والبشرة، (٨) السهولة ولين الجانب، (٩) ترك التعسف والتكلف، (١٠) إنفاق بلا اقتار وترك الادخار، (١١) التوكل، (١٢) القناعة بيسير من الدنيا، (١٣) الورع، (١٤) ترك المراء والجدال والعتب إلا بحق، (١٦) ترك الغل والحد والحسد، (١٧) ترك الماء والجاه، (١٥) وفاء الوعد، (١٨) الحلم، (١٩) الأناة، (٢٠) التواد والتوافق مع الإخوان والعزلة عن الأغيار، (٢١) شكر المنعم، (٢٢) بذل الجاه للمسلمين. الصوفي يهذب الظاهر والباطن في الأخلاق. والتصوف أدب كله. أدب الحضرة الإلهية الإعراض عما سواه حياة وإجلالاً وهيباً. أسوء المعاصي حديث النفس وسبب الظلمة.

“The science of Sufism is the science of Islam which pertains to the internal self, external self, and the strength of conviction. This is the loftiest science. The condition of the Sufis entails the rectification of character and constant submission to Allāh ﷻ. The essence of *taṣawwuf* involves: Imbibing the character [Divine Qualities] of—Allāh ﷻ [into his own]. His own will should be removed and the servant should become totally engrossed in attaining the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. The character and mannerisms of the Sufis are the same as that of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – as per the declaration of Allāh ﷻ: ‘You [Oh Muḥammad ﷺ] are certainly on a lofty pedestal of character’ – and whatever else is described in the Ahādīth (acting upon it is included in the character of the Sufis).

Details of the Sufis’ character are as follows:

(1) To consider oneself to be the most insignificant. Pride is its opposite. (2) To interact in a gracious manner with people and to bear their injuries and wrongs. (3) To interact with leniency and affection and to abstain from anger and rage. (4) To be concerned about the well-being of others and to give preference to others with kindness. This means that the person must give preference to others over his own self. (5) To be generous. (6) To overlook and pardon.

(7) To have a smiling appearance and to be cheerful. (8) To be tolerant and to adopt a gentle approach. (9) To abstain from formalities and making a show of oneself. (10) To spend, without restriction, but not so freely as to cause one to become needy. (11) To place one's trust in Allāh ﷻ. (12) To be content with little of this world. (13) To be abstinent. (14) To abstain from fighting, disputing and arguing – unless it is for a just cause. (15) To abstain from hatred, malice and jealousy. (16) To abstain from desiring respect and authority. (17) To fulfil one's promises. (18) To be forbearing. (19) To be far-sighted. (20) To be loving and affectionate towards one's fellow brethren, yet to remain aloof from outsiders. (21) To be grateful to the person who does good to one. (22) To spend one's efforts for the benefit of Muslims.

A Sufi cultivates his internal and external character. *Tasawwuf* is *adab* (manners and etiquette) in its entirety. Etiquette, in the Court of Allāh ﷻ, entails turning away from everything other than Allāh ﷻ out of modesty and awe in front of Allāh's ﷻ Greatness. The worst act of disobedience is speaking with one's self, and it is a cause of darkness.”²

These few lines, written by Hadrat Imām Rabbanī, could be

² Speaking to one's self (*ḥādīthun nafs*) is what we would call day-dreaming or fantasizing in simple English. In the Court of Allāh ﷻ, this is the 'greatest disobedience' because – instead of the heart being attentive to Allāh ﷻ – it has engrossed itself in the creation.

For example: Imagine that a person has an appointment with the king of a country. During the time of his scheduled appointment, the king is attentive to him, while the person who scheduled the appointment is speaking on his cell phone to someone else, or admiring the gardens. The king will ask: "Why did you make an appointment with me and cause me to leave other important work if your attention is somewhere else and not with me?"

When speaking to ourselves, we are intentionally inattentive to Allāh ﷻ – The Mighty, The Powerful. Is this not the worst disobedience and darkness?
[Khanqah Sheikh Zakariyya]

considered a synopsis of all the discussions which the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷺ have collected in thousands of voluminous books. The above few lines are the essence and core of all the details and explanations which have been provided about this pure religion of Islam over the last 1400 years.

Hadrat had explained the reality of *sulūk* and *taṣawwuf* and the nature of *tarīqah* on numerous occasions. Every part of his body and every aspect of all his statements and actions expressed the true nature of *taṣawwuf* – let alone every word during his talks. However, he used to occasionally provide short and comprehensive definitions to his associates – similar to the above-quoted paragraph. On the 6th of Ramadān al-Mubārak 1322 A.H., at mid-morning, he sat in the shade of a wild-fig tree in the company of a few special people. He delivered the following talk – which was immediately penned by Maulwī Barkatullāh Sāhib. I thus present it to the reader and request that it should be read with full attention:

The essence of all forms of dhikr, spiritual exercises, meditations (murāqabah) and so forth, is that man can experience Allāh's ﷺ Presence. Some people have divided this 'Presence' into two categories: The *ism-e-dhāt* (Personal and Unique Name of Allāh ﷺ) must first be established in one's imagination. Once the Name has been established, it is easy to reach the Named [Allāh ﷺ]. The forty days [of seclusion, meditation, dhikr etc.] and other similar programmes which were initiated by the elders, were all for the same purpose – to create a condition in which one's thoughts and imagination is unable to be drawn to anything else. For instance, if you go outside, you should cover your face because, if your gaze should fall upon any person, an image of that person will taint and pollute your imagination. Just as a person has constant knowledge of himself, he should also have that same constant knowledge about Allāh ﷺ. The difference is that he is able to identify himself as a person possessing a body and shape, and he is able to see his own eyes, nose, ears etc. while he has a knowledge of Allāh ﷺ without

having seen Him. This is the meaning of *النهاية راجعة إلى البداية* (when the end returns to the beginning) – just as a new-born intuitively knows of the existence of Allāh ﷻ.

The establishment of this thought is the pinnacle of everything. At times, man forgets about his own self when he is zealously engaged in something. However, this 'forgetting' of his is very subtle and almost non-existent.

In order for the above to be realised easily, the *mashā'ikh* of the past used to try to get their *murīds* to give up all their evil characteristics first. However, the latter day *mashā'ikh* – especially those of our *silsilah* (spiritual chain) – preferred to use the system of excessive *dhikr* until these evil characteristics become subdued through *dhikr* and *dhikr* thus overpowers everything else.

There are numerous evil characteristics, but the majority [of *mashā'ikh*] have restricted it to ten. The core of all ten is said to be pride (*takabbur*). If pride is removed, the others will automatically be removed. A person remained in the company of Hadrat Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh* for twenty years. One day this person said to him: "Hadrat, I have remained with you for so long but I have not acquired anything from you." This person enjoyed an exalted and senior position in his family and amongst his tribe. Hadrat Junayd understood that there was pride in his heart. Thus he said to him: "Very well, you must do one thing for me: You must fill a bowl with walnuts, sit with it at the entrance of the *khānqāh* and announce: 'Anyone who strikes me once with his shoe shall receive one walnut. The one who strikes me twice shall receive two walnuts...' continue increasing the number in this way. Once the bowl of walnuts is empty, you must return to me." The person replied: "Lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh – Hadrat, I can never do this." Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* said to him: "This is such a blessed *kalimah* which – if a seventy-year-old *kāfir* should read it with sincerity, then by Allāh, he will become a believer.

However, by your reading it just now, you have become like a *kāfir*. Get away from here, you will not acquire anything from me.”

He then mentioned another Shaykh in whose company a person had remained for a very long time. The person also complained that, after all this time, his heart had not yet been reformed. The Shaykh asked him: “Miyā! What do you mean by ‘reformation’?” He replied: “Hadrat, whatever bounty I receive from you, I will convey to others.” The Shaykh said: “All evil has started from this very intention of yours. You have already assumed that you will be a Shaykh. Remove this vile thought from your heart and think thus: ‘It is compulsory upon me to be grateful to Allāh ﷻ and to worship Him Alone for the numerous bounties which He has showered upon me.’”

Those who engage in *dhikr* or perform *ṣalāh* with the hope of receiving its benefits are really foolish. Their intention is not correct. What benefit and what reward will they receive? We should first of all be grateful for our existence, body, eyes, nose, ears, tongue and senses, which Allāh ﷻ has bestowed upon us. After doing this, we can think about other benefits and rewards.

At this point, Hāfiz Zāhid Hasan Sāhib posed a question. He asked: “Hadrat, you said that if a person remains occupied in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ all the time, it is sufficient for him. It is not necessary for him to do anything else.” Hadrat replied: “Provided he does the *fard* acts and the *ṣunan-e-mu’akkadah*.” Hadrat then quoted a Persian saying:

*This is the occasion of a silent ṣalāh ...
Whoever reaches this stage
has no need for the outer appearance of ṣalāh.
In spite of this,
whoever misses a single ṣalāh ...
he is rejected forever and ever.*

"It is only the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ which is of value in this world. Everything else is harmful. Even if a person is unable to engage in *dhikr* with presence of heart [concentration] and it remains merely upon his tongue, it is still not devoid of benefit."

Al-hamdulillāh, the gist of this second volume has been provided by Hadrat's written statement [quoted previously] as well as the above-quoted talk. Through the *taufiq* (inspiration) of Allāh ﷻ, an intelligent person would be able to understand everything in this concise summary. I am not qualified to explain or expound upon it, but I make a sincere *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to grant us all the sweetness of Imān and the light of Islam whereby we may submit to this knowledge and practise upon it. This is not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ Ordered His servants to refine their characters and to adorn their lives according to the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ whom He sent as a practical example of that way of life.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"There is certainly an excellent example for you in the Messenger of Allāh."

The above verse informs the entire creation that the heart and the rest of the body should be moulded according to this example and then it should be presented before Allāh ﷻ.

At the age of twenty-five, Imām Rabbānī received the lamp of guidance from the practices of the *mashā'ikh* and their traditional ways. This glittering lamp could now be seen. The first question which he will be asked when he presents himself before the King of kings will be: "Have you cultured [your character] and embellished yourself according to the example and mould [of Rasūlullāh ﷺ] or not?" There probably did not exist a single moment during the remainder of his life during which his heart was heedless of

emulating Rasūlullāh ﷺ. In this regard, he was unique and matchless during his era.

From far and wide, people with different circumstances and backgrounds used to present themselves before Hadrat at various times. They came in their thousands and their times of arrival varied. However, Hadrat's task remained the same and his occupation remained unchanged.

If a person visited Hadrat, after not having seen him for ten years, he would find him in exactly the same condition and circumstances. He was absolutely and resolutely engrossed in following the Sharī'ah and utterly loyal to it. Consequently, his mere existence and presence would serve as an answer to the thousands of questions from those who were desirous of following the Sunnah. They would obtain prophetic education regarding the various incidents and events of life by merely observing his life. Their tongues would be excused from questioning others, because their eyes could see a practical example of the culture and way of life which their hearts had questioned. Observing him was enough to create an urge in them to act likewise, and it provided them with courage and support to put it into practice [the Sunnah]. His daily activities and practices taught the lessons of refinement and rectification to every ordinary person who approached him and removed the doubts and misgivings of the '*ulamā*'. He would remove contradictions and provide a practical application of knowledge – thereby fulfilling the prophetic responsibility of deputyship.

The '*ulamā*' and highly-educated *maulwīs* who sat in his circle – lowering their heads before him – never did so out of blind and ignorant *taqlīd*. On the contrary, this group [of '*ulamā*' and *maulwīs*] had tested and tried him for many years, and had come to the conclusion that Imām Rabbānī was a true representative of the [prophetic] example and a practical manifestation of academic

topics. They agreed to submit before him, pledged *bay'ah* to him, and considered his acceptance of their request for guidance to be a means of salvation for them in the Hereafter.

Allāh ﷻ Forbid! I am not saying that Imām Rabbānī was a prophet and a *ma'sūm* (one who is Divinely Protected), nor am I suggesting that he could not commit mistakes. Allāh forbid! I could never say such a thing. However, I say with certainty that he was a devoted and ardent follower of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and that he had been sent by Allāh ﷻ to this world as a guide and imām so that people could learn lessons of Divine Guidance from his words and actions. I believe that his body had been protected against disobedience so that it could not become a cause whereby people would be deviated from the path. At present, there is no such personality in India. I do not believe that there was anyone similar to Imām Rabbānī during his time.

This is why none of his opponents, despite their severe opposition to him, could criticize or accuse him of any open defect or fault which was considered as such according to the Sharī'ah. Eventually, his merits were portrayed as faults [by his opponents]. This is also why his abhorrence of *bid'ah* – which was in reality the fruit of his intense love for the Sharī'ah and the Sunnah – was referred to as a 'sin' for which they eventually labelled him a *kāfir*. Destruction to them! Destruction to them!

Two years have passed since his demise. If all the people were to gather, spend all their energy, draw from their memories and spend several months in trying to find a single incident during which Imām Rabbānī had missed a single *ṣalāh*, displayed laziness in performing *ṣalāh* with congregation, or showed the slightest disinclination towards any Shar'ī matter, they will, *inshā Allāh*, not be able to find a single incident. At the time when he attended the *dastārbandī* in Deoband, it was probably the '*asr ṣalāh* when Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb *Sāhib* stepped forward to lead the

people in salāh. Due to the vast crowd of people, thronging to shake hands with Hadrat, the *qirā'at* (recitation) had already commenced by the time he joined the congregation. When he completed his salāh, he was completely overtaken by remorse and – with intense grief – he uttered these words: “How sad! Today I missed the *takbīr-e-ūlā* [for the first time] after twenty-two years.”

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was from among the fortunate and pure souls of the *ummah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, who had been blessed with the rank of proximity [to Allāh ﷻ] and *wilāyat*, experienced the sweetness of *īmān* and a tranquillity which was accompanied by the light of conviction which had been placed within their hearts. He had been endowed with a special share of this internal enjoyment. Consequently, he was the leader amongst the *mashā'ikh* and *auliyā'* of his time and had been given leadership over the guides and deputies of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – namely the '*ulamā'*'. He was the 'commander of the army of '*ulamā'*'" and was garlanded with the honour of being the chief among chiefs – the reformer of the reformers. This pure group of accepted servants of Allāh ﷻ were like roses and aromatic flowers in a garden, while Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was like the scent of the rose [the essence of the flower] which imbued the world with its fragrance.

He was certainly a human being with the possibility of committing errors and mistakes. However, since he was seated upon a pure pedestal as a guide to the world – which was the legacy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – Allāh ﷻ had provided him with guidance and had supervised him every step of the way. He entered as the senior member among the group of *auliyā'* and his statements, actions, heart and limbs were protected and safeguarded during every era. His tongue and body parts were supported and inspired by Allāh ﷻ and were brought under His tutelage in order to save mankind from deviation.

Although he did not make the following statement verbally, his

method of *tablīgh*, together with his actions, were manifestations of this unspoken statement: "Listen! The truth is what issues from Rashīd Aḥmad's tongue. I take an oath upon Allāh! I am nothing, but in this era, guidance and salvation is dependent upon following me."

The '*ulamā*' used to become embroiled in disputes regarding certain intricate and complex issues because they were bound to proof and evidence. Whenever they found themselves unable to make a clear distinction between right and wrong, they would fall into confusion and doubt. In such a situation, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī – by virtue of the light of Prophethood which had ignited his heart – would expound the truth, establish the correct opinion, and pass a decision without the need to resort to searching for proof and evidence. This is why very few references and quotations can be found in his *fatāwā*. In reality, the truth is not subservient to proof – rather, proof is subservient to the truth. It [proof] is merely its outward sign.

It is neither easy, nor necessary, to fully understand the high rank and close proximity to Allāh ﷻ which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī enjoyed. One thing is clear and acknowledged by all – he had been endowed with a total engrossment [in following the Sunnah] and a passion for emulating Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This was something which nobody else in his era had been bestowed with. He was the essence of all the pious personalities of his time, the core of all the accepted servants in the Court of Allāh ﷻ, and the chosen leader of the group which had been showered with Allāh's ﷻ Mercy. He was blessed with a steadfastness and fortitude in *Dīn* – unparalleled amongst his contemporaries. Friend or foe, voluntarily or under compulsion – everyone acknowledges that Imām Rabbānī had tread the clear path of the Sharī'ah and Sunnah throughout his life until he eventually sacrificed his life for it. Everyone agrees that those things which his opposition considered to be *bid'ah ḥasanah* (a good innovation), was considered as *bid'ah sayyi'ah* (an evil innovation) by Hadrat

Imām Rabbānī, and thus they disliked him for his disapproval. However, his detractors themselves acknowledge that he was unique in the manner in which he adhered to those actions which were acknowledged by the opposition as Sunnah acts of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, or as acts of a Sahābī ؓ.

What was the reason behind this steadfastness and unique fortitude, and where did it come from? If it were easy to acquire this, why did his detractors not acquire it before or after their objections? Allāh ﷻ is Witness and His Testimony is sufficient. This [steadfastness and fortitude] was his essential merit and a great *karāmat* – which normally cannot be performed by others – and it was not enjoyed by anyone else. It was the fruit of submission which cannot be acquired without first surrendering one's life in the path of Allāh ﷻ. This is the most select among royal gifts which is only given to the chosen and beloved ones of a specific era. The bearer of this gem is crowned with the crown of guiding the creation, he is seated upon the throne of prophetic deputyship, and he is made popular by the title of Qutb al-Irshād (the guiding star). After the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, such a person is sent to this world as an example during every century. In this way, sincere character and true physical and spiritual reformation – as is Loved by Allāh ﷻ – can be demonstrated practically to the creation. Thus, when they are presented before the King of kings on the Day of Resurrection, they cannot offer any excuse. This is the meaning of such personalities being حجة الله في الأرض (Allāh's Proof and Evidence on earth) and من آيات الله (from among the Signs of Allāh).

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنْ أَحْزَابِهِ وَوَفَّقْنَا لِاتِّبَاعِهِ وَامْتِثَالِ أَوْامِرِهِ

“O Allāh! Include us amongst his group and inspire us to emulate him and follow his orders.”

Just as Allāh ﷻ has created a difference in the physical appearance

of each person, He has also made their conduct and mannerisms different. Consequently, whenever any bounty was sent forth by Allāh ﷻ, some people – out of gratitude – accepted this bounty with open arms, placed it upon their heads, passed it over their eyes and, after proving themselves to be His grateful servants, they became beloved by Allāh ﷻ. There were others who looked down upon this bounty and, because of their ingratitude, they not only had this bounty snatched away from them, but they were cast out of Allāh's ﷻ Court and became manifestations of those who had 'lost in this world and in the Hereafter'.

When a generous relative extends an open invitation and spreads out his vast *dastarkhwān* (table mat), there are many who enjoy the sumptuous delicacies which are offered to them. Many others are caught in the web of fault-finding and are thus deprived of the benefit which can be derived from the meal. The same applies to the Heavenly *Dastarkhwān* in every era. Man, in his wickedness and ignorance, either benefits or remains deprived of whatever Allāh ﷻ sends down. His benefit or deprivation depends upon that which had been destined for him at the time when his fate was recorded in the Preserved Tablet (*Lauh-e-Mahfūz*).

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was commissioned in Makkah Mu'azzamah as a model of refined behaviour and reformation to every human and jinn, people like Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat 'Umar ؓ were the fortunate ones, while Abū Jahal and Abū Lahab were the wretched, unfortunate, deprived and unlucky ones. No Muslim could ever forget the gratitude which was displayed by Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat 'Umar ؓ for having received this Divine Bounty, nor could they forget the regret and remorse of Abū Jahal and Abū Lahab.

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ eternal miracle – the Qur'ān – is the fully-laden *dastarkhwān* of Heavenly Bounties which every person, noble and ignoble, has been permitted to partake of. Obviously, this 'Royal

Edict' is a clear proof in favour of a fortunate, knowledgeable and practising Muslim; while it is a clear proof against an unfortunate and evil sinner. There is no place whatsoever for such regret in the blessed life of Imām Rabbānī which could cause us to ask: "Why did some ungrateful people not recognize his value? Instead of following and emulating this physical manifestation of Divine Guidance, why did some people reject him, criticize him, make objections against him, and oppose him?" No one can claim more than that which has been destined for him to receive, nor can anyone escape that which has been destined for him. It is therefore impossible for those Muslims, who were destined to be deprived of 'Allāh's proof and evidence on earth' [Imām Rabbānī] through their fault-finding, to escape that which had been allotted to them! After all, this was also an inescapable Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and was bound to be found in the life of the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and *mujaddid* of his era.

وَذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

"This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows upon whomever He Wills. Allāh is Possessor of Mighty Grace."

The fortunate seekers of rectitude and guidance who were blessed with a share of this bounty – whether in full, or in part – should express their gratitude, because the descent of these heavenly bounties was the first favour shown to them and the inspiration to benefit from it was another favour. Congratulations unto those who found Imām Rabbānī's presence to be in their favour, and countless congratulations unto those whom Imām Rabbānī had appointed as his deputies (*khulafā*). He had appointed them as a testimony to the creation and had left them in this world in a condition in which their purified and cleansed hearts had been illuminated by the prophetic lamp. The tree of their hearts were bearing the fruit of *wilāyat* and *nisbat*. May Allāh ﷻ reform this worthless servant [the author, Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī] by virtue of his services to this select

group [Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā*].

I now present an article containing aspects from Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's life, the strict division of his time, and the fruit of his steadfastness and fortitude in *Dīn*. This article was written by Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī 'Azīz ar-Rahmān Mujaddidī Naqshbandī – the muftī of Madrasah Deoband – upon my request. He certainly honoured me by acceding to my request. It is included in this biography so that it may remain protected until the Resurrection.

HADRAT'S DIVISION OF TIME

عِنْدَ ذِكْرِ الصَّالِحِينَ تَنْزِلُ الرَّحْمَةُ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī's knowledge, practice, abstinence, piety, reliance, patience, and his acceptance of Divine Decree was of a level beyond description. He had spent his entire life in absolute steadfastness, spending all his time – whether night or day, on journey or at home – in the obedience of Allāh ﷻ. His *majlis* used to be filled with effulgence. The '*ulamā*' of *zāhirī* and *bāṭinī* knowledge would benefit from his academic discussions, while the people of the heart would acquire peace and tranquillity.

For twenty-two years I had the opportunity of presenting myself to him, but I never found any change in his occupations. He would spend his time strictly on whatever he had reserved it for. He was able to combine the Sharī'ah with the *Tarīqah* and was a fountain of knowledge and practice. I have neither seen nor heard of any personality in today's day and age who can compare to him. He was unique in his knowledge of the sciences and matchless in his emulation of the Sunnah.

He would always take a siesta (*qaylūlah*) from 12:00 until 1:00 p.m. At 1:00 p.m., when the *adhān* for *zuhr salāh* was called, he would immediately wake up and make preparations for the *salāh*. Most of the time he would take a bath before *zuhr*, perform the *Sunnahs* of *zuhr* in his room and remain occupied in *dhikr*. When it was time for the congregation, he would step out into the Musjid and make the *imāmat* for the *zuhr salāh*. Upon completing the *fard*, he would return to his room and perform his *Sunnahs* there. After performing two *rak'ats* of *Sunnah* and two *rak'ats* of *nafl salāh*, he would read a few *wazā'if* (plural of *wazīfah*), occupy himself in the recitation of the Qur'ān and then engage in verbal *tasbīh* and *tahlīl* (saying *Lā ilāha illallāh*). If any of his guests or attendants had any questions, they would pose these to him at this time. He would answer their questions and engage in other necessary conversations, but would remain in meditation and verbal *dhikr* throughout the duration of this time. His total engrossment in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ could be visibly seen upon his face.

While occupied in all of this, the time for '*asr salāh*' would arrive. He would perform a fresh *wudū'* and proceed to the Musjid. He would perform two *rak'ats* of *nafl salāh* and lead the people in the *fard salāh*. Most often, a group of his attendants and other people would await him as he stepped out of his room after '*asr*'. The residents of the town would also come at this time. Guests and *murīds* would generally remain in attendance. The '*Ulamā*' who were present would pose their questions and *Hadrat* would provide academic answers to these. He would continue in this way until *maghrib*. He would remain occupied in *durūd* and *dhikr* throughout this entire period.

After the *maghrib adhān*, he would step into the Musjid and lead the people in *salāh*. He would perform the *Sunnah* of *maghrib salāh* and the *awwābīn salāh* in the Musjid and thereafter he would remain in meditation for a long time. Upon completing the prescribed *du'ā's* and other forms of *dhikr*, he would sit for some

time, either inside or outside his room. Thereafter he would proceed to his house for supper.

He would return to his room before '*ishā*', perform *wudū*', enter the Musjid, perform two *rak'ats* of *nafl salāh* and lead the people in the *fard salāh*. He would perform his *Sunnahs* and *witr* in the Musjid and return to his room. The '*ishā salāh*' would always be delayed according to the *masnūn* (recommended) time. After the '*ishā salāh*' he would engage in some *dhikr* and *wazā'if* and then he would rest for a while.

After half the night had passed and about one third of the night remained, he would wake up and perform *tahajjud*, whereafter he would busy himself in the recitation of the *Qur'ān* until *subh sādiq* (true dawn) – as per the instruction of Allāh ﷻ:

وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

"... and [keep] the recitation of the *Qur'ān* at dawn. Verily the recitation of the *Qur'ān* at dawn is witnessed [by the angels]." (Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 78)

At dawn, Imām Rabbānī used to recite the *Qur'ān* from memory. He would perform his *Sunnahs* after *subh sādiq* and remain occupied in his room. When it was time for the congregation, as per the *madh-hab* of Imām Abū Hanīfah – that is, when the sky was quite light – he would proceed to the Musjid and perform the *imāmat*. Thereafter he would return to his room and remain in solitude until after sunrise. After *ishraq salāh* his room would be opened to the public.

People would come to him and each one would benefit from his discourses on the *Sharī'ah* and the *Tarīqah*. He would have his meal between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., take a short siesta as per his normal routine, and thereafter he would remain engrossed in

wazā'if and so forth – as was his norm.

This is the gist of how he would spend his time in the obedience and worship of Allāh ﷻ. No change ever occurred in this timetable. Janāb Maulānā Muḥammad Munīr Ṣāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I was with Hadrat Maulānā during our journey to the Hijāz. One day, while we were on board the ship, he needed to take a bath at *tahajjud* time. He said to me: 'Draw one or two buckets of water from the sea so that I can take a bath.' I said to him: 'It is still night time. Why don't you wait until the morning?' There is no harm if you miss *tahajjud* one day while you are on a journey.' However, Hadrat did not permit this. He took a bath immediately, performed *tahajjud* and occupied himself in *wazā'if* and Qur'ān recitation, as was his normal habit."

In the beginning, although he was engrossed in these activities, he would conduct Hadīth lessons from after *ishrāq* until about 11:00 a.m. This included a lot of research and investigation. After the *zuhr ṣalāh*, *wazā'if* and Qur'ān recitation until 'asr' time, these Hadīth lessons would be resumed. Countless students of *Dīnī* knowledge benefited from him and became occupied in guiding Allāh's creation.

On one occasion, I was present with the students in Hadrat's Hadīth class when, at one point, he said: "My *ustād* (teacher), Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī *rahimahullāh* used to say: 'The further away a person is from his *nafs*, the closer he is to Allāh ﷻ.'" Apart from academic aspects, his lessons would also be filled with *bātinī* (spiritual) components. After his eyesight became weak, Hadrat stopped conducting Hadīth lessons. From that time onward, his *bātinī* discussions progressed to a very high level and those who were seekers of Allāh ﷻ managed to reach their goal within a short period. They would complete their *bātinī* journey, depart, and convey the same benefits to others. In short, Allāh's ﷻ Door of Mercy remained open – and anyone who entered was accepted.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*"This is the Grace of Allāh,
which He bestows to whomever He Wills."*

There was a time when I was in the service of Hadrat Murshidunā Maulānā Muḥammad Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib Naqshbandī Mujaddidī, the *khalīfah* of Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Mujaddidī – may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with both of them. Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib came to Deoband. Hadrat Maulānā Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib said to me: "Present yourself in the service of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī – just as you would present yourself to me." When I appeared in front of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī with this intention, I experienced spiritual effulgence – just as I used to experience when I was in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Rafī' ad-Dīn Sāhib. I did not find any difference between these two personalities. Whenever I used to go to Gangoh after Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Rafī' ad-Dīn had emigrated and passed away, I used to feel as though I was entering a new world and, for as long as I remained in Gangoh, I would experience a unique feeling of purity, unity of heart and concentration. I cannot describe the affection, attention and numerous other bounties which I received from Hadrat Maulānā. The outward and internal affection and attention which he accorded to every person who was present was of such a level that each person would assume himself to be the most beloved and dearest in Hadrat's sight. Why should this not be the case? The *kāmilīn* (those who have attained spiritual perfection), who have imbibed the character of Allāh ﷻ (متخلق باخلاق الله) into their own characters, possess the quality of the sun which is never miserly in bestowing its light.

*Due to Your Bounty, the clouds of spring make the gardens bloom.
Whether is be a thorn or a beautiful rose – it is Your Creation.*

*Whatever defects there may be,
they are due to the shortcomings of the creation.
Otherwise, there is no defect in any of Your Bounties.*

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was a personality to whom people constantly referred. Seniors and juniors would present their worldly and spiritual needs to him and, by virtue of his *du'ā'*, their needs would be fulfilled. Everyone looked up to him, while he looked up solely to Allāh ﷻ. He would view all matters with Allāh-endowed-insight and was beyond praise and reproach. While I was teaching in Madrasah 'Arabīyyah in Meerut, I sent a note to Hadrat in which I wrote about something that I considered to be stressful and inconvenient. Hadrat replied with the following couplet:

*Due to shame, I cannot shed any tears,
for whatever You have done, [it] is in my best interest.*

This reply displayed Hadrat's total steadfastness and clearly displays the fact that nothing stressed him whatsoever. He considered everything to be from Allāh and recognized it as such. On one occasion, A'lā Janāb Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote to Hadrat. He asked Hadrat to write about himself and his personal condition. Hadrat replied with the same statement – praise and reproach was the same to him. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was most pleased with this reply and said that it marked a very high level of *wilāyat*.

Although he was totally immersed in the Oneness of Allāh ﷻ and *wāridāt* (inspirational occurrences) descended upon his heart, he did not ever – even for a moment – disregard his strict emulation of the Sunnah. After spending time with Janāb Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* [in Makkah], I returned to India and found myself experiencing the effects of *tauḥīd-e-wujūdī* (experiencing the Presence of Allāh ﷻ) gaining the upperhand. This was against my Naqshbandī Mujaddidī *maslak* (way). I started experiencing this

beyond the limit and the following poem, which I composed at the time, displays my condition:

*He is clearly evident – even behind many veils,
for an expert is able to recognise Him.*

*He is like the fragrance, hidden in a rose ...
like the intoxication, hidden in wine.*

*He is like a red rose, still hidden in its seed ...
like the subtlety, hidden in the Jasmin.*

*He is Apparent, yet Hidden, when we look at Him.
Only the expert recognises the hidden [beauty] in Him.*

*In truth, can anyone truly recognise Him?
This is my recognition for those who see through the veils.
He is the Knower – the One, well-known by all.
He is the Beloved and the Lover.*

*His Appearance is in whatever we see.
What can exist without Him?
Sometimes He appears as the desirous Beloved.
In every colour, His Colour can be found.*

*O intelligent one, witness His Power!
He has made the creation dependent upon Him
so that each one [may] seek Him Alone.*

While in this condition, I had a dream in which I saw myself seated upon a very swift, agile, and tall horse. The path upon which I found myself, consisted of steep hills and plunging valleys, but the horse carried me across this rough terrain without any effort. With every step that it took, I experienced the fear of falling down. While continuing along this path of fear and hope, I saw a clear, straight and wide street leading away from this rough terrain. I turned the horse in the direction of this street and my eyes opened.

I had another dream in which I saw myself in the Musjid of Meerut. It was built on a high bank, and the land upon which it was built was a great distance away from the street. I walked towards the street. There was a drain between the bank and the street. I leaped across the drain and landed on the street. While leaping across, a few drops from the drain splashed onto my legs. I considered these drops to be excreta. The street upon which I landed was very clean, level, and wide. Upon reaching the street, I saw a beautiful wagon which was drawn by swift and beautiful oxen. Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī was seated upon the wagon and it was moving at a swift and awe-inspiring pace. I started running behind it, but could not reach it. In the meantime, Hadrat turned around, saw me, and stopped the wagon. I think my eyes opened after that.

After this dream I felt that my success was confined to remaining in Hadrat's companionship and in emulating him. While in his service, I saw Hadrat personally bringing food to me in the Musjid. My recovery from the previous condition was solely through the blessing of Hadrat's company. It was then that the statement which had been made by Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī *rahimahullāh* regarding the Sharī'ah, *Tarīqah*, and *Haqīqah* had become clear to me.

In statement (*maktūb*) number 36, volume 1, he stated the following:

*"To say 'yes' [to agree] is a blemish if it is against the truth.
By Allāh, it never came out of his mouth in this way!
There is disgrace in the word 'no' [to refuse] and it is shameful.
It was never uttered by him –
especially in fulfilling the needs of others."*

With equal firmness Hadrat Maulānā adhered to the Sharī'ah and considered all objectives to be confined to it. His investigation in this regard was the same as that of Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib

rahimahullāh, and he remained steadfast in this same condition and path. Irrespective of a person's merits, Hadrat would refute him without any hesitation if he ever stepped out of the bounds of the Sharī'ah in the slightest manner.

On one occasion he said: "There was a Sufi who loved me a lot, and I maintained contact with him and respected him equally and considered him to be a Sufi. After some time, he said to me: 'Whenever I engage in the *dhikr* of الله هُوَ (*Allāhu*), I say الله هون (*Allāh hūn* – in Urdu this translates as 'I am Allāh'). Upon hearing this, I immediately said to him: 'O you rejected one! Are you Allāh?' I never saw him again."

When the truth had to be stated, Hadrat never bothered about anyone. Even when the greatest of *mashā'ikh* and '*ulamā*' slipped up on the Sharī'ah, he would refute and reject the person immediately. Hadrat's guidance would suffice for those who were destined to receive guidance and goodness. As for those who were destined to deviation and wretchedness ... they would remain entrapped in their deviant ways.

Hadrat never concealed the truth and never sided with falsehood. Once, when there was a mutual dispute at our *madrasah*, I had a dream in which I saw Hadrat and some other people enter my Musjid in Deoband. They sat down on the Musjid floor. Hadrat then separated himself from them and went to my room. If I remember correctly, he placed both his hands on my room door. I experienced the effects of this. Some critics of mine had conveyed to Hadrat that I had been intermingling with those who were antagonistic towards the *madrasah*. However, this did not influence him in any way and falsehood was defeated. Falsehood had no impact upon his blessed heart in any way.

My *ustād*, Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib – a senior *khalīfah* of Hadrat and the *mudarris-e-awwal* of *Madrasah*

true metaphysical miracle which even ordinary Muslims cannot share in – let alone the disbelievers. In their efforts to earn this, one has to work tirelessly, strive for years on end, and spend countless days in spiritual training.

A defect in one's spiritual composition is known as a spiritual illness. A person with a spiritual illness has to search for a spiritual physician with the intention of receiving treatment for his illness. He would have to remain at this 'spiritual hospital' for many years. It is a lengthy process and the acquisition of this is difficult. For that reason many people do not make an intention to acquire it. Those who are devoted seekers and who [are willing to] bear the difficulties are the true men of Allāh ﷺ, while those who fall short in this regard are termed weak and spineless.

It was this same balanced heart and *husn al-khuluq* which had made Hadrat Inām Rabbānī a unique personality during his era – in the midst of numerous trials and tribulations. He assumed the seat of prophetic deputyship and was given the title of Qutb al-Irshād (a star of guidance and instruction). This is because of the level of perfection, firmness and steadfastness with which he emulated the habits and acts of worship of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Such qualities are yet to be witnessed in this present century. The zeal and enthusiasm with which he followed the smallest of Sunnahs was never heard of anywhere else. He possessed an intense love for the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ. We would probably not be wrong if we were to say that he had totally immersed himself therein and that he was absolutely absorbed in his emulation of the Sharī'ah. He was mindful of emulating Rasūlullāh ﷺ at every step. There was nothing which brought him more joy than following the Sharī'ah. His actions would constantly convey these words: "A person who adheres to the Sharī'ah, but has no effulgence (*nūr*) in his heart, is still better than a person who appears to have effulgence in his heart, but acts in contradiction to the Sharī'ah."

If anyone were to ask me about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's character and qualities, I would have no answer apart from this: His character was an emulation of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his quality was absolute steadfastness to the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – sacrificing himself for it with overwhelming love. If there were a few isolated incidents which reflected this unique embodiment of perfect character during our era, I would have related them. His entire existence was placed in the mould of the Sharī'ah, and it was as if he did not even possess the ability to act against the Sharī'ah. He once made the following statement at a large gathering: "Brothers, I have something to say, and Allāh ﷻ knows full well why I am saying it (in other words, I am not saying it out of pride. I am merely expressing the truth). My way is the exact way of the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم. Remain steadfast in it and do not let it slip by."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's entire being – his movements, residence, clothing, manner of sitting, manner of walking etc. – was naturally modelled according to the impeccable way of the Sunnah, which could be referred to as *husn al-khuluq*. It was always his practice to enter the Musjid with the right foot first and to exit with the left foot first – as per the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His close observers would check to see how he fulfils the two opposite Sunnahs – such as stepping out of the Musjid with the left foot first and wearing the shoe of the right foot first. They would see him step out with the left foot, placing his foot on his left shoe, then removing the right foot from the Musjid and wearing his right shoe immediately. The left foot, which had been placed on the left shoe would then be raised and he would wear his left shoe. When he commenced walking, he would start with his right leg. This practice was probably never neglected throughout his life and no one ever heard of him practising upon it differently. If a person is so strict in following the Sharī'ah in such minor practices, and is so consistent in carrying out *mustahab* acts – what can be said about his emulation of the Sunnah.

From amongst the large group of Hadrat's associates, there is probably not a single one who did not witness his strict observance of the Sunnah. Hadrat's visitors did not comprise of only those who were affiliated to him. In fact, there were many others who – after hearing of his strict observance of the Sharī'ah – would come to test him. There were also those who came with evil intentions. However, this intrinsic merit of emulating the Sunnah – which had become Hadrat's second nature – served as a means of guidance for such people and all their pre-conceived ideas about him would change completely.

Asad 'Alī Sāhib – presently a police inspector in Peshawar – writes: “When the desire for a *pīr* (Shaykh) entered my heart, I left no region in India unturned in my quest. I took leave from my job and went from Bengal to Madras, Deccan, Punjab, Sarhad, Afghanistan, Bombay and the central parts of India. I met countless Sufis, but did not find what I was searching for – total adherence to the Sunnah. I eventually lost hope and returned because my leave had almost come to an end. Upon my return, I reached Muzaffarnagar and, coincidentally, I overheard a fellow traveller on the train speaking about Hadrat Maulānā. A slight thought entered my mind and I felt there would be no harm if I went to Gangoh as well. I presented myself to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and my dense heart opened up immediately. My despair changed into hope. This was because I had found that which I had been searching for in every action and habit of his. In fact, it was even beyond what I had been searching for. In a matter of a few hours, the purpose of my lengthy journey was fulfilled and I requested *bay'ah*. All thanks is due to Allāh ﷻ – my request was not refused. I cannot describe the effect which the *bay'ah* had on me, and still has on me to this day.”

Ever since Hadrat commenced delivering Hadīth lessons and the system of *Daurah Hadīth* was initiated, a large group of 'ulamā' who were experts in the field of Sharī'ah, would present themselves before him. Whatever academic lessons these students had learnt

'Arabīyyah Deoband – wrote the following poem about Hadrat:

*I take an oath in Allāh's Name!
His mouth never uttered the word 'yes' against the truth.
The word 'no' also testifies to the fact
that he never uttered it in favour of the truth.*

Although Hadrat was affiliated with the Chishtī family, he was absolutely firm upon following the Sunnah and had reached a lofty level of acceptance in this regard. In this manner, he displayed to the Sufis of his time that this [following the Sunnah] has been the original practice of the Chishtīyyah and that this was the prophetic affiliation which had reached the *mashā'ikh* through the Sahābah ﷺ. He demonstrated to them that all four paths unanimously agreed on this principle and that it was the destination of all of them. His pioneering method of instruction was unique and highly effective. In this way he managed to wipe out many prevailing customs, and highlighted many hidden Sunnahs. He revived the *Sharī'ah* and the *Tarīqah*, and was the nucleus of guidance and instruction during the latter part of this era.

On one occasion when I visited Sirhind, a thought entered my heart that Hadrat is a star of guidance (*Qutb al-irshād*). His way was the way of *sulūk* – as accepted and acknowledged by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and he was a *mujaddid* (reviver). I relayed this thought to Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Hāfiz Khalīl Ahmād Sāhib, who was a senior *khalīfah* of Hadrat, and he concurred with my statement. Hadrat's new investigations regarding the injunctions of the *Sharī'ah* and the *Tarīqah*, his exceptional explanations of Qur'ānic verses and Ahādīth, his insightful expositions of academic issues, and his methods of instruction clearly proves the accuracy of my statement. The affirmation and concurrence of anyone else is not really necessary. It is like musk which emanates its fragrance of its own accord -- without the need of a perfumer.

ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

"This is the Grace of Allāh which He bestows to whomever He Wills. Allāh is Possessor of Mighty Grace."

In a letter which I had written to Hadrat, I had posed several questions to him. One of my questions was concerning the verse:

وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

"Man shall only receive what he strove for."

[From this one can deduce] that man will only benefit from his own actions, and that the actions of others will not benefit him at all. However, benefitting from the actions of others can be established from the Ahādīth and it had been unanimously agreed upon by the Sahābah ﷺ and the imāms. Hadrat provided several answers.

One of the answers he provided was as follows:

"If the words '*what he strove for*' are understood as meaning '*striving for īmān*', then there will remain no objection and no contradiction because, in such a case, it would mean that a person will not derive any worthy benefit from his own actions unless he is striving for *īmān* and unless he possesses *īmān*. Thus, he will only be able to benefit from the actions of others if he has *īmān* within himself and if the quality of '*striving for īmān*' can be found in him. Therefore, man only benefits on account of the *īmān* in his possession." Some of Hadrat's writings (*maktūbāt*) have been published. This issue has been quoted in detail in these publications and it ought to be studied.

Behind the veil of *wahdatul wujūd* (unity of existence), some contemporary *mubtadi'īn* (those involved in innovations) try to render the Sharī'ah baseless. They make statements which, in effect, removes any difference between *īmān* and *kufr*. They

substantiate their false claims by providing the following verse as their proof:

أَجْعَلِ الْآلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا

*"Has he [Muhammad ﷺ] made the worship
of so many gods into just one God?"*
(Sūrah Sād, 38: 5)

In other words, [they claim that] Rasūlullāh ﷺ had made all the gods into one, and considered the idols to be the true object of worship (Allāh ﷻ forbid!). This is but one amongst various other statements which the accursed *mubtadi'īn* have made.

Hadrat provided an explanation to this verse in a manner which rendered the evidence of the disputant null and void. The gist of Hadrat's reply in this regard is as follows:

وعجبوا أن جاءهم منذر منهم فقال الكافرون هذا ساحر كذاب بحيث ينكر
آلهتنا الموجودة المحسوسة هذا شيء عجب و أو يعدُّ آلهة كثيرة شيئاً
ومعبوداً واحداً فهذا شيء أعجب من الأول والحاصل أنه من مظاهرات
الكفار ومقالاتهم الفاسدة ليس فيه تقرير أن هذا الجعل صحيح في نفسه
ليصح به استدلال الخصم.

"They [the disbelievers] were surprised that a warner from among them had come to them. [With regard to him], they therefore said: 'He is a sorcerer and a liar' for refuting our gods, who are present and whom we can see and touch. He is saying a very strange thing. Does he consider many gods to be just one thing which is to be worshipped? This is even more strange than the first thing. In essence, these were merely the assumptions and baseless statements of the disbelievers. The above-quoted verse does not concur with 'making so many gods into one God', nor does it consider it to be correct in itself. Therefore this verse – which was quoted by the

disputant as a proof – cannot be accepted as being correct.”

If one *sūrah* or *pārā/juz* of the Qur’ān is recited and its reward is conveyed to several deceased people, Hadrat felt that the preferred opinion in this regard was that the reward would be divided [amongst them], and that each of the deceased would receive a share of the reward. He used to relate an incident in this regard: “I had conveyed the reward for the recitation of the Qur’ān, as well as other good deeds, to several deceased. Afterwards I saw one of the deceased. He said to me: ‘Why are you not conveying reward to me?’ I replied: ‘I most certainly conveyed it to you.’ The deceased said: ‘Yes, you conveyed portions and pieces of rewards.’ This clearly shows that the rewards are divided...”

Hadrat had a close attachment to Hadrat Qutb al-‘Ālam Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. He would very often speak in praise of him, relate his miracles and speak about his excellent qualities. He was greatly impressed by him. On several occasions, Hadrat relayed the following story, which is well-known as *Darbār-e-Ihtisāb*. A police inspector had prohibited Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs from engaging in *simā’*. Because of that prohibition, he refrained from engaging in it for a few days. One night, when he got up for *tahajjud*, a mill-stone – which was laying nearby – recited this poem: “*Ye dekho chambal ke ghāt pāt dūbei pat-thar tarā’ ein.*” Upon hearing this, his condition changed and he was overwhelmed by a condition of ecstasy (*wajd*). He sent a message to the police inspector and told him that he could impose whatever fine he wanted upon him, because he had no choice in this matter and could not stop [from engaging in the *simā’* which he had prohibited him from]. Upon entering the *khānqāh* area, the police inspector instantly fell unconscious [due to the effect which the *simā’* had on him]. Upon regaining consciousness, he apologized to Hadrat Qutb al-‘Ālam, pledged *bay’ah* to him, and became a *Sāhib-e-ahwāl* (one possessing lofty spiritual conditions).

Hadrat then explained the poem:

“The word *pāt* refers to thin slivers of stone which had become separated from large rocks. These slivers are very light. Thus this means: “Go to the bank of the Chambal river and you will see a unique manifestation of Allāh’s Power – you will see the thin slivers of stone sinking, and the large heavy rocks floating upon the surface of the water.”

This is a reference to the verse:

فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“He whose scales are weighty – it is they who shall triumph ...”

Hadrat related a *durūd sharīf* (salutation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ) of Hadrat Qutb al-‘Ālam *rahimahullāh* to me, and I immediately recorded it on a piece of paper:

سمعت قطب الإرشاد وغوث العباد ومعاذ البلاد مولانا رشيد أحمد كنگوهي
وقت حضوري بحضرته العلية يوم الإثنين ثالث عشر من شهر الله المحرم
١٣٢٣ يقول إني رأيت قطب العالم الشيخ عبد القدوس كنگوهي قدس سره
في المنام وهو قائم في روضته المقدسة مكان دفنه وهو يصلي على النبي
صلى الله عليه وسلم بهذه الصيغة اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ بِعَدَدِ
كُلِّ ذَرَّةٍ أَلْفَ مَرَّةٍ

“On Monday, the 13th of Muharram, 1323 A.H., I visited Maulānā Rashīd Ahmād Gangohī and heard him say: ‘I saw Qutb al-‘Ālam Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* in a dream. He was standing in the grave in which he had been buried and was sending the following salutation to Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ بِعَدَدِ كُلِّ ذَرَّةٍ أَلْفَ مَرَّةٍ

“O Allāh! Send salutations to Muḥammad ﷺ

*and the family of Muhammad ﷺ
equivalent to the number of every atom – one thousand times."*

Some time before Hadrat's demise – I think it was during the same visit when I heard the above *durūd* from him – I heard him say: "It is an accepted fact that the Prophets ﷺ – especially Rasūlullāh ﷺ are alive. However, the verse إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ shows that every person will die. Hadrat then provided an excellent explanation which I wish everyone could have heard in person. Because of the time which has elapsed since that day, I do not remember his exact words, but the gist of it was thus: Death shall overcome everyone, but the souls of the Prophets ﷺ reach a certain level of witnessing Allāh's Beauty and Power and, as a result, every particle of their bodies is affected by this – to such an extent that it falls into the command of the soul. This entire body then perceives Allāh's Beauty and Power, and this entire body becomes a 'life' in itself. This 'life' is of a different nature and it can be established from the words [of the Hadīth]:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ أَجْسَادَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

*"Allāh ﷻ has prohibited the earth
from devouring the bodies of the Prophets."*

When Hadrat explained this, I felt as if I was witnessing this condition and I experienced a unique emotion and joy. That is all.

والسلام على من اتبع الهدى والتزم طريقة المصطفى صلوات الله وسلامه
عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه وأحبابه وأتباعه إلى يوم الدين، وآخر دعوانا أن
الحمد لله رب العالمين.

"Peace be upon him who follows guidance and adheres to the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Eternal peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, his

family, his Sahābah, those who love him, and those who follow him. My final supplication is thus: All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the universe.”

CHARACTER AND DESCRIPTION

I saw a holy man in Gangoh.

I saw a chosen servant of Allāh.

Which of his excellent qualities should I describe?

[Every quality of his is beyond description.]

I saw an angel in the form of a human.

The word *akhlāq* (character) appears to be very concise and it is a word that can easily be understood. However, if an in-depth study of its comprehensiveness were to be conducted, one would realize that the different stages which has to be traversed by every sincere Muslim in order to attain a high level of *ṣiddīqīyyat*, are all contained in this word. The external and internal rectification and reformation which one needs in order to reach the lofty rank of *wilāyat* are all included in the word *khuluq* (singular of *akhlāq*). The true law, through which Rasūlullāh ﷺ had removed the sinking humanity from its ocean of ignorance and had brought it onto the main path of guidance, is the essence of *khuluq*. Umm al-Mu'minīn, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah radiyallāhu 'anhā, referred to this in response to the question which was posed to her regarding the *akhlāq* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. She replied thus: “His *khuluq* was the Qur'ān.” In other words, he was the physical embodiment of all Qur'ānic teachings. It was as though the practical essence of this Divinely Selected Book had been given the garment of existence in the name ‘Muhammad ﷺ’, and sent forth into this world.

People have generally misunderstood the meaning of *khuluq* and I therefore feel it necessary to explain the nature and essence of this word – which is the essence of all merits. Every person is made up of a body and a soul. The soul is an internal article and its

composition is related to internal powers and conditions. It can only be perceived through the eyes of the internal self – that is, through *baṣīrah* (insight).

In Arabic, the composition of the body is known as *khalq* and if the body parts are normal, balanced, and fully functional, we refer to it as *ḥusn al-khalq* – i.e. beauty. The spiritual composition is known as *khuluq* and, if the internal spiritual powers are balanced and moderate, we refer to it as *ḥusn al-khuluq* – i.e. good character.

The internal composition of the soul is dependent upon four fundamental powers: (1) *qūwwat-e-'ilm* (power through knowledge) (2) *qūwwat-e-ghadabīyyah* (power of anger), (3) *qūwwat-e-shahwat* (power of lust), (4) *qūwwat-e-'aql* (power of intellect). Just as any imbalance or defect in the body parts would result in physical unattractiveness, any imbalance, excess, and disproportion in the internal powers would result in an evil character and bad conduct.

A beautiful and handsome person would be one who is not so tall as to compel people to look up at him, nor should he be so short as to cause people to bend down towards him when embracing him. His complexion should not be so black that it appears as though darkness had fallen upon him and he is shining with blackness. He should not be so white that it seems as though the dawn is glittering upon him. He should not be so fat and hefty that it is difficult for him to walk, nor should he be so thin that the wind can lift him off his feet. His arms must not be so long that they drag on the ground and not so short that they do not reach his hips. In short, every limb should be proportionately balanced and every part of the body should be symmetrical.

Similarly, a person of good character and good manners would be one whose knowledge is not so weak and limited that he is rendered incapable of differentiating between truth and falsehood. He should

also not be so free and liberated that he constantly tries to fathom obscurities and is bent on comprehending matters related to the Essence and Attributes [of Allāh ﷻ].

His *qūwwat-e-ghadabīyyah* – known as anger – should not be so weak that it renders him indifferent even when he sees that Allāh ﷻ is being disobeyed and that sins are being committed, nor should it be so free and unrestricted that it makes him indifferent to the repentance of someone who apologizes to him.

His *qūwwat-e-shahwat* – known as desire – should not be so free and unrestricted that it creates greed in him, nor should it be so limited that it creates pride and ostentation in him and makes him self-opinionated.

His *qūwwat-e-'aql* – intellect – should not be so over-confident and impudent [shameless] that it causes him to be devious and scheming. It should also not be so limited that he is dim-witted and foolish.

In short, all four parts of the soul should be balanced, proportional, and sound. Only then will it be *husn al-khuluq*.

Allāh ﷻ likes good character and ordered His servants to rectify and reform their soul. Therefore the Sharī'ah encourages and emphasises the acquisition of this internal balance. The essence of all Qur'ānic teachings is that man should present himself before Allāh ﷻ – after balancing and beautifying all his internal powers. It is also the essence of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ twenty-three years of effort. Lives must be sacrificed for *husn al-khuluq*, for the culturing [sophistication and refinement] of the soul, and for the rectification of the heart.

The balanced state of *qūwwat-e-'ilmīyyah* (knowledge) is known as *hikmat* (wisdom). Allāh ﷻ refers to it as follows:

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

*"He bestows wisdom to whomever He Wills.
Whoever is bestowed with wisdom,
is bestowed with abundant good."*

The fruit of a balanced knowledge (or wisdom) is a person's ability to differentiate between truth and falsehood, identify between honesty and lies in speech, differentiate between moral and immoral actions, identify the Sunnah as being Sunnah, and *bid'ah* as being *bid'ah*, and to believe that obedience is the means to salvation and that disobedience is the means to destruction and failure.

A balanced *qūwwat-e-ghadabīyyah* (anger) is known as *shujā'at* (bravery) and it results in generosity, courage, valour, forbearance, independence, vigour, patience, respect, foresight, leniency, courtesy and the ability to suppress one's anger. When *qūwwat-e-ghadabīyyah* goes beyond its limits, it is known as *tahawwur* (recklessness). This results in pride, anger outbursts, the inability to gauge consequences [of actions and words], regret, conceit and arrogance. When it falls short of its limits, it is known as *jubn* (cowardice) and this results in absence of self-respect, laziness, meanness, spinelessness, pettiness, pessimism, wretchedness and an acceptance of humiliation.

A balanced *qūwwat-e-shahwat* (lust) is known as *'iffat* (chastity). It results in modesty, decency, acceptance [of Allāh's decision], contentment, fear [of Allāh ﷻ], humility and the desire to show kindness to the creation. When *qūwwat-e-shahwat* falls short or exceeds the bounds, it results in greed, selfishness, praise and flattery before the weak creation, submission, timidity, looking down upon the poor, shamelessness, extravagance, ostentation, narrow-mindedness, jealousy, malice, hatred, obstinacy and cowardice – all of which are disliked by Allāh ﷻ.

A balanced 'aql (intellect) is known as *dhakā* (intelligence) and it results in foresight, accurate decision-making, self-preservation, pleasantness, protection of the categories of worship (such as *fardh*, *wājib*, *Sunnah* etc.) preservation of the limits of the Sharī'ah, a keen perception of one's servitude and submission [to Allāh ﷻ], appreciation of one's Master [Allāh ﷻ] and Allāh-consciousness. This results in total engrossment in obedience [to Allāh ﷻ], and in giving preference to the Hereafter over this fleeting world during every moment of one's life regarding every issue. When there is any shortage or excess in this, it results in evil habits like stupidity, foolishness, deviousness, pretension, folly, regret, cruelty and callousness. These are abhorred by Allāh ﷻ and repugnant in His Sight.

There are many stages and levels of [outer] beauty. Some people are more beautiful than others. In like manner, there are many stages of *husn al-khuluq* (good character). The balance in the internal powers of the soul is at a high level in some people, while in others it is at a lower level. Just as Yūsuf ﷺ is considered to have been the most handsome and most beautiful in physical appearance, and his outward beauty could never be equalled – in like manner, Allāh ﷻ considers Rasūlullāh ﷺ to be *أَحْسَنُ الْخَلْقِ خُلُقًا* the 'best of creation' with respect to his character. No equal to him has been born into this world and the heavenly inhabitants have not come across anyone who is more balanced, or in possession of a more refined heart and a more righteous soul than him.

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ unique and righteous character was the reason why he was accorded the highest level of *mahbūbiyyat* (the most beloved creation of Allāh ﷻ). The Qur'ānic teachings encompass this excellent character which he possessed and no one other than him has been a physical and practical manifestation of 'perfect character' and 'rectification'. That is why the words *خُلِقَ الْقُرْآنُ* (his character was the Qur'ān) explains this quality so beautifully. The

words *إِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ* ["Indeed, you (O Muhammad ﷺ) possess a most excellent character."] serve as a certificate of approval from his Appreciative Master [Allāh ﷻ] and as an everlasting licence to success.

Monitoring this very same *husn al-khuluq* (good character) has been made *fard* upon us and is considered to be the criterion for *wilāyat* (close friendship with Allāh ﷻ). The sanctified group of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *Ummah* – known as *auliyā' Allāh* (the close friends of Allāh) – attained this necessary balance in their internal spiritual powers and most certainly acquired *husn al-khuluq*. It is obvious that a higher or lesser degree of *husn al-khuluq* has caused a difference in the rank of *wilāyat* among the *auliyā' Allāh*. The closer a person's internal and spiritual power is to that of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the higher his rank in proximity to Allāh ﷻ and the more beloved such a person is to Him. The less a person adheres to the Sharī'ah, and the less he emulates the Sunnah, the further away he is from the rank of *wilāyat*.

Unfortunately, the masses misunderstood the true meaning of *tarīqah* and considered pseudo-sufis – who were blatantly breaking the laws of the Sharī'ah – to be the true exponents of Sufism. Similarly, they did not fully understand the meaning of *khuluq*. They believed that it merely meant 'pleasing the creation' – irrespective of whether it pleased the Creator. If *khuluq* were that easily obtainable, many deviated and immoral disbelievers would manage to become people of *khuluq*. In fact, they would surpass the Muslims in this regard because the *auliyā' Allāh* have thousands of enemies, whereas these [disbelievers] are beloved by thousands of people merely because of their flattery and smiling faces.

I earnestly request the reader to make an effort to understand the criterion of *wilāyat* properly and to grasp it fully, because it is this very internal beauty which is known as *tahdhīb al-akhlāq* or *islāh-e-nafs* and it is the essence of *tarīqah*. The acquisition of this is a

from him, they would find a practical example of it in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. They were able to gauge the extent of his practical adherence to the lessons he had taught them. At present, there are thousands who had studied under his tutelage and there are numerous amongst them who had the opportunity of remaining in his company by day and night. These students had the opportunity to gauge the balance in his internal spiritual condition – something that could most probably not have been gauged by anyone else – because they were presented with countless opportunities during which they could evaluate and test him. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, there is not a single person from amongst this entire group who can single out any weakness in Hadrat with regard to his *husn al-khuluq*, balanced heart, emulation of the Sunnah, and adherence to the Sharī'ah.

All the students who came from other places were not necessarily inclined towards him, nor were they his *murīds*. If they were, it could have influenced them to speak in his praise. Nevertheless, these people must have seen something in him which caused the majority of them to become his *khādims* and *murīds* after qualifying under him. As for those who did not pledge *bay'ah* at his hands ... they spoke highly of him for the rest of their lives and returned to their respective towns and cities, fully acknowledging his unique qualities regardless.

Maulwī 'Alī Ridā Sāhib writes: "During my student days, I had the opportunity of remaining with Hadrat for five consecutive years. After that, I also had the occasion to visit him at regular intervals. I was in search of a Shaykh and did not want to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of just anyone. Thus, I carefully observed Imām Rabbānī's actions and habits. Allāh ﷻ is my witness – I observed Hadrat's actions, habits, mannerisms and routines with a critical eye. The All-Knowing Allāh ﷻ is Witness – I did not find a single act of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī against the Sunnah. As far as was humanly possible – I did not even find him omitting something which was

mustahab or preferable. At no time did he ever go beyond that which is *mubāh* (permissible). It is beyond my capability to describe his character and qualities. Even if I were to speak continuously [for the rest of my life], my words would not be able to encompass his qualities. Allāh ﷻ blessed him with a full share of the character of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. I never saw this example in anyone else. On numerous occasions during my student days, I saw him exercising patience when confronted by the infuriating actions of students. At times, some students would commit inappropriate actions which were against Hadrat's temperament and which other *maulwīs* would never have tolerated. Most often, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would come to know of such actions. However, when conducting his lesson, the attention and focus with which he treated all his students would remain the same. He would not in the least exhibit any disinclination or inattention towards the disrespectful student. Consequently, the student would regret his action of his own accord, retract, repent over his inappropriate action, and become a righteous student. During this lengthy stay of mine, I never saw Hadrat – not even on a single occasion – becoming angry with any student or *khādim*, scolding him or reproaching him. Even during those days, the obstinacy of opponents had reached such a level that they would make insolent and rude statements against Hadrat and other elders. They used to write these statements and post them to Hadrat. Hadrat would occasionally read the insolent remarks himself. Sometimes others would read it to him. I take an oath upon Allāh ﷻ, I never saw a single trace of grief or anger upon his face and I never heard Hadrat uttering a single word against them. The most he would say was: 'May Allāh guide him.' At times, he would smile and turn his face away. I have not come across such a high level of magnanimity anywhere else."

"When I eventually completed my exams and my studies, I requested *bay'ah*. In a very affectionate tone Hadrat said to me: 'Bhāi! Will I not meet you again? Are you going to sever your ties with me completely?' These words – which were filled with

fatherly affection – fell on my heart and tears began flowing spontaneously from my eyes. I tried to control myself but could not. I pictured myself being separated from Hadrat and my eyes continued weeping involuntarily. While in this condition, I replied: 'No, Hadrat, *inshā Allāh*, I will come every year.' He said: 'It is not necessary to make such a condition. *Inshā Allāh*, if you return at some time in the future, I will accept your *bay'ah*.' I was honoured with pledging *bay'ah* two or three years later."

The general definition of *khuluq* (character) could also be found to a level of perfection in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. It was in total accordance with the Sunnah and Sharī'ah and there was no indication whatsoever of any excesses or shortcomings. The affectionate relationship he shared, and the treatment which he accorded to all his associates in general – and to his devoted friends in particular – was such, that each one of them felt that Hadrat's love and affection for him superseded his love and affection for the others.

In his devout proximity to Allāh ﷻ and his extreme desire to emulate the Sunnah, his balanced *qūwwat-e-'ilmīyyah* (rational power) provided him with the ability to differentiate between the Rights of Allāh ﷻ and the rights of his fellow humans. Consequently, when it was time for him to engage in worship and occupy himself in other devotional practices (*ma'mulāt*), he would not bother about anyone – irrespective of whether it was a wealthy person, a poor person, a close relative, a distant traveller, a host, a guest, an *'ālim* or an ordinary person who was sitting nearby. Hadrat would leave them all and carry out his task. However, when he had fulfilled the Rights of Allāh ﷻ and it was time to see to the rights of others, he would always give preference to the creation over his personal comfort. He would converse with them jovially for hours on end, inquire about them and their circumstances, give his opinions on their worldly occupations and concerns, and convey words of consolation and encouragement.

There was a time when he suffered from severe bleeding stools and people lost hope in his survival. He became extremely weak and found it difficult to change his posture. Outsiders would come to visit him and, in their enthusiasm, they would sit right next to him. At times there would be a large assembly of people and even a normal, healthy person would have felt claustrophobic. But Hadrat never asked anyone to get up and leave. People would surround him for hours on end. Sometimes, out of sympathy towards him, some people would want to ask the visitors to leave, but Hadrat would always say: "Miyā! Let them remain seated."

Ābhah is a place which falls under Sahāranpūr district and it is situated near Rāmpūr. A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had occasionally stayed over in this village. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would therefore go there with much enthusiasm and would look at the entire village with utmost respect and reverence. The residents of this village were also very much attached to Hadrat. Not only the Muslim men and women – even the Hindus loved him intensely. Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Sāhib was a resident of this village and he was one of Hadrat's devoted *khādims* since his youth. He says: "On one occasion Hadrat came to Rāmpūr and upon our request – that is, Hadrat's *khādims* – he promised to come to Ābhah as well. Consequently, a conveyance was sent to fetch him. I got up early that morning and when I came out of my house, I saw an old woman sweeping the road. I asked her: 'What is happening today [why are you sweeping the road]?' She replied: 'Don't you know? Maulwī Sāhib is coming today'. I proceeded further and saw great excitement over Hadrat's impending arrival. The people were expressing more joy [over his impending visit] than what they would for 'īd. Hindus, Muslims, and even small children went out to the Rāmpūr road to await his arrival. Hadrat arrived after *zuhr* and spent one night in the village.

The women-folk of all the houses were eager to meet Hadrat. Numerous requests arrived in the morning. The women in *pardah*

(*hijāb*) summoned Hadrat to their houses and pledged *bay'ah* to him. Hadrat suffered from back ache because of all this moving about, but he did not tell a single person that he was discomforted because of walking about in this manner. Some women who were from religious families did not want to part with Hadrat, and he was summoned to their houses several times. I personally became angry at them for causing such inconvenience to Hadrat. However, Hadrat went to their houses as many times as they summoned him. He eventually perceived my displeasure [at their repeated summoning] and said to me: 'In Delhi, an old woman came to Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Sāhib for some work. Shāh Sāhib said to her that he did not have time to see her. In an emotional tone the poor old woman said: "O Allāh! I have no way of reaching You and the person who has contact with You is not paying any attention to me. Now what must I do?" No sooner did the woman utter these words, when Shāh Sāhib's condition changed. I think he also said that, whatever favours he had been bestowed with [from Allāh ﷻ], were snatched away from him. Shāh Sāhib continued crying for several days. He went out in search of the old woman and, upon finding her, he asked her to forgive him for his shortcomings. He then fulfilled her request. Only then did Allāh's favours return to him. Bhāi Nazar Muḥammad Khān! I am very scared. That is why I will go to their houses as many times as they summon me.'"

Due to his perfect emulation of the Sunnah, he had a special love for the residents of his hometown. Based upon the Hadīth:

حُبُّ الْوَطَنِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

"Love for one's hometown is part of imān."

He had a special kinship with every child in Gangoh. Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī says: "I used to work in Gwalior. Every year I used to go to Gangoh for a two month holiday. If I went to Hadrat immediately upon my arrival - well and

good. If not, I would perceive sadness on his face. This was because of his intense affection for me. In like manner, I felt that Hadrat wanted me to meet him at the exact time of my departure for Gwalior. On one occasion, I did not inform Hadrat of my imminent arrival. I merely wrote to a relative stating: 'Please also inform Hadrat of my arrival which is around the corner.' Coincidentally, he did not remember to inform Hadrat. When I presented myself to him, the first thing he said after replying to my *salām* was: 'Could you not have even informed me?' I replied: 'Hadrat, I sent a message to such and such a person to inform you.' He replied: 'He did not inform me.'

If anyone was going to Gwalior, Hadrat would give Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib's address to the person, saying: 'You must definitely visit him and convey my *salām* to him. He is very dear to me.' Thus, many people would go to meet Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib and tell him: 'We have come to meet you in fulfilment of Hadrat's orders.' Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib once came to Gangoh for his holiday. When the two month holiday was about to end, he went to Hadrat – as was his habit – and said: 'Hadrat, I will be leaving the day after tomorrow.' He replied: 'Very well.' Hadrat then turned towards Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā and said: 'Miyā Maulwī Yahyā, two months have passed so quickly. Maulwī Ismā'īl is departing.'"

Hadrat used to love young children profusely. On one occasion Maulwī Maḥmūd Aḥmad Marḥūm's son, Sa'īd Aḥmad – who was only eight years old at the time – came to Hadrat, placed his hand around his neck, and demanded something. Just then Hadrat's son, Hadrat Hakīm Sāhib, happened to make his appearance. He gave Sa'īd Aḥmad a stern look and said to Hadrat: "Hadrat, this child is becoming very audacious." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī smiled and quoted this saying:

*The branches of a rose bush
provides space for the petals to fall (in safety).*

Hadrat's grandson, Hāfiz Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, had a daughter by the name of Ruqayyah who was about three or four years old at that time. Whenever she went to Hadrat, he would carry her affectionately and seat her on the bed. Sometimes she would jump onto his lap and at other times she would get up. She would take his hand and place it on her anklet, saying: "Abbā! Look at what I am wearing." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī valued each of her actions and would do whatever she wanted. At times she would say: "Abbā! Will you make me your daughter?" Hadrat would reply: "Yes, you are my daughter." She would say: "Give me something." Then Hadrat would call out to Maulwī Muhammad Yahyā Sāhib and say to him: "Bhāi, if there is anything, give it to Ruqayyah." In short, she used to speak with love and affection to him for as long as she remained in his company. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would occupy her mind with absolute affection and kindness. Upon observing such scenes, onlookers would be reminded of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ affectionate treatment towards his grandsons, Hasan ﷺ and Husayn ﷺ and they would have, before their eyes, a scene from the best of eras (*khayr al-qurūn*) wherein Rasūlullāh's ﷺ love and kindness would be displayed.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī could not tolerate unnecessary strictness with children. If he were to hear of a small child being beaten or scolded, he would become restless. It would affect him severely whenever he received a complaint about a father beating his daughter. He would advise the father appropriately. Maulwī Muhammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī once beat his son, Muhammad Jalīl. The boy's aunt complained about it to Hadrat. When Maulwī Muhammad Ismā'īl Sāhib came to Hadrat the following day, Hadrat said to him: "Maulwī Ismā'īl, come here." Maulwī Ismā'īl started laughing because he realized that news of him beating his child had reached Hadrat. Hadrat said: "What are you laughing about? Come here! Maulwī Yahyā, you also come here. (Maulwī Muhammad Yahyā

used to beat his son, Muḥammad Zakarīyyā,³ a lot.)”

Ḥadrat then sat on a bed and said: “Maulwī Yahyā, I am asking you a *mas’alah* – to what extent can a person hit a boy?” This was sufficient advice for him. What answer could Maulwī Yahyā give? Ḥadrat repeated the question several times and eventually said: “Maulwī Ismā’īl, I want you to promise me that you will not be so harsh in beating Jalīl. If you do not give me your promise, I will not permit you to take Jalīl to Gwalior with you. I will keep him here and teach him myself because he is dear to me for two reasons: (1) because you are dear to me, and (2) he is ‘Abd al-Majīd’s grandson.” Maulwī Ismā’īl eventually made a promise saying: “Ḥadrat, *inshā Allāh* this will not happen again.”

Ḥadrat’s son, Ḥakīm Maulānā Mas’ūd Aḥmad Sāhib, was also present at the time. He said: “Ḥadrat, I also beat Sa’īd.” Ḥadrat replied: “I am aware of the fact that you beat Sa’īd. A child should not be beaten in such a manner. There is no harm in one or two slaps.” Ḥadrat advised his close associates in particular, and his other friends in general, in this unique and affectionate way.

Ḥadrat was intensely desirous of guidance spreading throughout the world. There was nothing which brought him greater joy. He was severely affected and grief-stricken by deviation and ignorance. There was nothing which caused him greater displeasure. He would go to great pains to spread the truth and destroy falsehood, and would be constantly concerned in this regard. Whenever any new tribulation (*fiṭnah*) crept into *Dīn*, he would devote all his efforts towards stopping it, and he would adopt whatever measures he could in order to do so. He had a natural aversion to debates and arguments. He could not tolerate articles that propagated *bid’ah* and

³ He is none other than Ḥadrat Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*.

sin, and his eyes would become moist with tears whenever he read such articles. If the truth be told, these were not mere tears. Out of anger and rage, blood flowed forcefully through his body and his hands and legs would tremble.

With great control over himself, he would reply to such an article – holding firmly to the Sunnah. He always wanted his reply to be published and spread far and wide. If any courageous person undertook the responsibility [of publishing the article], he would be immensely pleased with him and make a lot of *du'ā'* for him. Some of these replies that were published in booklet or book form were: *Fatwā Zuhri Ihtiyāfī*, *Sabīl ar-Rashād*, *Hidāyat al-Mu'tadī* and *Hidāyat ash-Shī'ah*.

I have never come across anyone who equals him in his desire and quest to revive abandoned Sunnahs. The discomfort which he had to endure because of his efforts in conveying *Dīnī* benefit to the people, and the reward of *jihād-e-akbar* (the greatest form of jihad) which he acquired during every moment of his life, is evident from the following statement which he once made: "My heart earnestly desires to leave everything behind and go away to Makkah, but then I think of the fact that ignorance among the people is increasing. I therefore feel compelled to remain here."

It was certainly the balance in *Hadrat's qūwwat-e-ghadabīyyah* (power of anger) which enabled him to merely smile and disregard all the *fatāwā* (plural of *fatwā*) of *kufī* and heresy which were issued, the disparaging articles which were written, and the speeches which were delivered against him by his opponents. However, he could not control himself with regard to the painful book *Anwār Sāti'ah*. Upon his instruction, a voluminous book, called *Barāhīn Qāti'ah* – which is filled with anger and grief – was written in a matter of a few weeks. This book was published and distributed throughout the world. The ability to practice self-control over one's anger, in the sense that one must be able to display one's

anger where the Sharī'ah compels one to do so, yet subdue it where the Sharī'ah recommends one to subdue it – to the extent that there is no sign of it – is truly a heroic quality which Rasūlullāh ﷺ described in the following words: “A strong person is not one who wrestles very well; a strong person is one who is able to control himself at the time of anger.” In other words, a person must be able to subdue his anger when he wills, and give vent to it when he wills.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to exhibit extreme displeasure with regard to incorrect and erroneous *masā'il*. He greatly liked firmness and inflexibility concerning matters of *Dīn* – according to the situation and place. Since he wielded relative influence over his associates, he would immediately draw their attention to any error committed by them whenever he came to know about it. He would prohibit the person from the action in an extremely affectionate, yet firm manner, and this would result in the person never having the courage to commit the same mistake again.

Pīrjī Muḥammad Hasan was one of Hadrat's *khādims* (attendants). He used to live in a village Musjid and, on one occasion, he told the villagers: “On Thursday nights, the souls of the dead get leave to visit their relatives.” The villagers sought verification of this from Hadrat Maulānā. He asked them: “Who told you this?” They replied: “Pīrjī – who sits in your company.” Hadrat asked Pīrjī: “Where did you get this *mas'alah* from?” He replied: “Hadrat, it is stated in *Maqāsid as-Sālihīn*.” Hadrat expressed extreme displeasure and said: “Such books are incorrect! Do not say anything unless it is obtained from reliable sources.”

Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī happened to go for *ṣalāh* to Lāl Musjid which was near his house. As per his habit, he stepped out of the *mihrāb* (the semi-circle enclosure at the front of a Musjid) [to lead the people in *ṣalāh*]. The people told him that Hāfiz 'Alī Hasan – the imām of the Musjid – told them that it was

permissible to stand in the *mihrāb* and that one of Hadrat Maulānā's *khādims* had also told them that Hadrat had issued a *fatwā* of permissibility. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib was not convinced. He proceeded to Hadrat and sought verification. Hadrat became very angry and called the person who attributed the *fatwā* to him, warned him and said: "When did I issue such a *fatwā*? You are accusing me of such things while I am still alive!" The Hāfizjī arrived a few days later but Hadrat did not forget about the issue. The moment the Hāfizjī sat down, Hadrat asked him: "From where did you issue the *fatwā* concerning *ṣalāh* in the *mihrāb*?" The Hāfizjī replied: "Hadrat, it is written in a certain Urdu book." Hadrat angrily replied: "Just keep your book aside. It is *makrūh* for the imām to stand inside the *mihrāb* and perform *ṣalāh* — irrespective of whether the *mihrāb* is in the front or in the back."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's treatment of his own people was that of absolute unity and harmony. He would treat all of them as though they were his own children and brothers. Since it is not unusual for children to enter and leave their homes constantly [throughout the day], no one pays much attention to their comings and goings. The father will also not ask his child when he arrived and why he left the house etc. In a similar manner, the *khādims* who attended to Hadrat did not adhere to the formalities which strangers adhered to when it came to requesting permission to enter or leave. In fact, there were times when people assumed that Hadrat was not paying any attention to them. However, Hadrat was fully mindful of the purpose for which they had come and therefore he paid full attention to fulfilling that purpose.

Hadrat was always concerned about the rectification (*islāh*) of his people — both when they were present in his company and when they were separated from him. He would constantly assist and support them through his spiritual efforts and the *du'ā*'s which he made for them during the latter part of the night. If he suspected that a certain matter would cause discomfort to a person who had

just arrived, or that it might cause him to have negative thoughts or cause his heart to harbour bad feelings, he would immediately present the actual situation as an apology. This caused his *khādims* to become enamored by him.

Maulwī ‘Abdullāh Sāhib Gangohī once went to his house to collect food for the guests. He saw Hadrat approaching along the way. Hadrat immediately said to him: “Bhāi! I used to personally bring food for a few guests, but ever since I became blind, I walk with one stick in my hand and use the other hand to feel my way. Now I have been excused.”

The *ṭabīb-e-ummah* (physician of the *ummah*), Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Sāhib [Thānwī], presented himself in front of Hadrat one day. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was lying down on his bed, so he sat down at the foot of Hadrat’s bed. Imām Rabbānī said [to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī]: “Bhāi! My legs are paining constantly and therefore I cannot sit up. Do not feel offended [if I remain lying down].”

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī’s informal manner, simplicity, and his usage of humble and ordinary words, were part and parcel of his habits. It is not possible for us to accurately describe these habits of his. He rarely used the word *hum* (we) when referring to himself and never used the words *āp* (a respectful term for ‘you’) or Hadrat when addressing anyone else. He considered such words to be too formal and adhered to the saying:

ما أنا من المتكلفين

“I am not one who follows unnecessary formalities.”

Obviously, whenever he spoke about the elders or related stories of the *mashā’ikh* and the ‘*ulamā*’, he would certainly refer to them by using the formal terms Hadrat, *Janāb* (sir), and so forth.

His informality was of such an extremely high level that he would not hesitate to say لا أدري (I do not know) if any ruling or *mas'alah* was mentioned that he bore no knowledge of. He would acknowledge his ignorance. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib relates: "I came across a few questions and answers which had been sent to me by a certain person. He had sent them to Hadrat and Hadrat had answered them. One of the questions which were posed was the following: 'Why are the pangs of death experienced more severely by children?' Hadrat merely replied: 'I am not sure.'"

Hadrat was a pillar of restraint when it came to exercising patience during calamities and tragedies. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib relates: "Hadrat Maulānā experienced five deaths in his family – one after the other. First his grandson, Hāfiz Muḥammad Ya'qūb, passed away. Thereafter his own son, Maulwī Maḥmūd Aḥmad, passed away. This was followed by his wife's death, whereafter Maḥmūd Aḥmad's mother passed away and left behind her suckling infant. This was followed by the passing away of Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib's daughter. I had the opportunity of remaining in Hadrat's company, both in public and in privacy, for many years, but I never heard him mention these deaths – not even once. I was always waiting for an opportunity to hear him speak about it, but I was never able to hear a single word uttered. Only once, after Hadrat had taken a bath and entered his room, he asked Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā for a *kurtah*. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā offered him a *kurtah* which he did not intend to wear. He said: 'Maulwī Yahyā, have you lost your mind? Not this *kurtah*! Take out another one.' Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib gave him another *kurtah* and left the room to perform *wudū'*. I was the only one with him in the room. Hadrat said to me: 'Bhāi! I addressed Maulwī Yahyā like that just by the way. In our circles, Maulwī Yahyā is considered to be the most intelligent.' I said: 'Hadrat, that is correct. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā is certainly an intelligent person.' Hadrat said nothing more except: 'If there was anyone who could judge a person's temperament, then it was Mas'ūd Aḥmad's

mother [Hadrat's wife].’ Apart from this one statement, I never heard Hadrat mention any of the above-mentioned deceased relatives.”

The fact that he did not speak about any of the deceased relatives does not mean that Hadrat was not afflicted by their deaths. The true pain is only known to the person who experiences such tragedies. The death of one’s children is a great tragedy. Even when animals lose their offspring, they can feel the pain. Man is in possession of an intellect and therefore he is able to experience grief and pain when he is separated from near and dear ones. This is an essential ingredient of man’s humanness. The Prophets ﷺ were also affected by such deaths. When Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ son, Ibrāhīm ﷺ, passed away, tears flowed from his eyes and he said:

إنا بفراقك يا إبراهيم لمحزونون

*“O Ibrāhīm! We are indeed grief-stricken
by your separation.”*

One’s wife and children are bounties from Allāh and, if one should not grieve over their demise, it would certainly smack of hard-heartedness and indifference. Man can never be independent of, and detached from the bounties which Allāh has bestowed upon him. Consequently, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī once made the following statement: “Mahmūd Aḥmad broke my back.”

Maulwī Fath Muḥammad Sāhib was Hadrat's *khādim* and was not informed of Mahmūd Aḥmad’s demise. As per his habit, whenever he wrote to Hadrat, he would ask Hadrat to convey *salām* to Mahmūd Aḥmad. In reply to one of his letters – after a period of two years had elapsed – Hadrat wrote: “In your letters you constantly ask me to convey *salām* to Mahmūd Aḥmad. Two years have passed since he departed from this world and left me distressed. I become restless whenever you ask me to convey *salām*

to him. Do not mention his name in future."

From the abovementioned statement it is obvious that Hadrat's internal condition was well-balanced. This condition of a believer is also known as *istiqlāl*. He bore it for two years after which he eventually expressed his grief. Such is the desirable and praiseworthy *istiqlāl* which is required by the Sharī'ah. The heart will certainly be saddened and grief-stricken, but man must not slow down to the extent where it causes a defect in his worship of Allāh ﷻ and in his obedience to his Master.

Hadrat had a natural desire for the propagation of *Dīn*. Thus, he never exhibited any tardiness in issuing *fatāwā* and replying to questions. Even during his days of illness and tragedy, he continued to reply to letters with the same promptness he exhibited while he was healthy and strong. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib says: "When my father passed away in 1305 A.H., I penned some questions regarding his estate and inheritance and sent them to Hadrat with a barber. I requested that Hadrat should provide me with a quick reply. There were many questions and Hadrat was suffering from conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eyes) at the time. May Allāh reward him! Despite his ill health, he replied to all the questions and even apologized for such concise answers by saying: 'I am suffering from conjunctivitis at the moment, and thus I wrote the answers with my eyes closed.'"

True love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ enabled Hadrat to bear such hardships in the service of *Dīn*. There were times when he would receive twenty to twenty-five letters at a time. Most of them contained questions and other essential issues. Hadrat would personally write the replies to all the letters and still complete his other daily tasks. There were times when he did not get a chance to reply to the letters during the day because of a profusion of visitors or engrossment in some other *Dīnī* service. On such days, he would write the replies after *'ishā* and reduce the short time he had set

aside for sleeping even further. He would never delay sending the post beyond the following day.

Hadrat used to console and reassure others in an eloquent and simple manner. Only rarely would one come across anyone who is able to do the same. Once a person related a dream to him in which he had seen Hadrat passing away, and this dream caused him much anxiety. Hadrat responded spontaneously: "Bhāi! I am sitting alive in front of you. Anyway, there will come a time when I will pass way. It will not necessarily occur immediately after the interpretation of the dream."

Hadrat was most ardent in establishing the truth and if – due to human constraints – he erred in a ruling, he would retract it the moment he was informed about his error and explicitly acknowledge his mistake. Once, a question was sent to Hadrat from Meerut. Hāfīz Muhammad Amīr was in *i'tikāf* during the last ten days of Ramādān. He had given some jewellery to Miyā Bhūre as a trust (*amānat*). Miyā Bhūre had placed the jewellery in the Musjid cupboard and proceeded to perform *wudū'* – forgetting about the jewellery. A question in this regard was sent to Hadrat. He replied as per the general principle: "Miyā Bhūre is an *amīn* (a person who has been entrusted with a trust) and he did not commit any wrong in that which had been entrusted unto him. Thus, he does not have to pay any surety." Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib says: "Coincidentally, I stopped over in Meerut on my way to Kānpūr. These people posed the same question to me. I excused myself from giving an answer because I did not have my books with me [to refer to]. I copied the question and proceeded to Kānpūr. While in Kānpūr, I came across a ruling in Tahtāwī [name of a book on jurisprudence] which stated that, if an *amīn* places an *amānat* somewhere, forgets about it, and goes away from there, his forgetting is not an acceptable excuse. I wrote my reply to the question in accordance with this ruling and sent the reply to them. When I met these people later on, they related to me that they had sent my reply to Hadrat for his appraisal.

Hadrat had concurred with my answer and explicitly retracted from his previous ruling.”

Hadrat was very much concerned about harmony among his *khādims* and associates. If he heard of any discord, he would make efforts to reconcile them. He possessed a very high level of *husn-e-zann* (good thoughts) about his sincere associates – to such an extent that people feared that their opponents would inform Hadrat about them. However, this fear was unfounded because his *husn-e-zann* was based upon absolute justice and balance – as was the case with all his other qualities. He disliked hearing complaints. If anyone complained about another to him, he would reprimand him and prohibit him from carrying tales. He would rationalize the complaint and try to look for a good explanation for it. When there was a problem at Mazāhir al-‘Ulūm Sahāranpūr, someone complained to him about the principal, Maulwī ‘Ināyat ‘Alī Sāhib, accusing him of showing the *madrasah* records to the opposing party. Hadrat immediately replied: “Maulwī ‘Ināyat ‘Alī is a man of integrity. He has always been under their authority. He probably feared [loosing] his livelihood and may have done it under compulsion.”

When a man loves a person, he develops an attachment to everything else which is associated with that person. Since love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ was firmly embedded in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī’s heart, he even loved the useless sticks and straws and the dirt which had been swept from the Haramayn Sharīfayn and would regard it all with special respect. He used to crush the date pips of Madīnah and store them in a box. Occasionally he would grind them into a powder and then he would consume the powder.

On one occasion he said: “People throw away the zam-zam water containers and date pips of the Haramayn Sharīfayn without thinking that these items enjoyed the air of Makkah Mu‘azzamah and Madīnah Munawwarah.” Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Sāhib

relates: "One day Hadrat took some of the powdered date pips of Madīnah out of his box and offered it to me saying: 'Here, eat this.' On another occasion he gave me tamarind from Madīnah. On yet another occasion, he gave me some soil of Madīnah saying: 'Here, eat this.' I said: 'Hadrat, it is *harām* to eat soil.' He replied: 'Miyā! That must be some other soil which you are speaking about.'"

Hadrat's quality of *īthār* (according preference to others over one's self) was of a very high level. If someone were to ask him for the *kurtah* which he was wearing, he would remove it immediately and give it to that person. When Maulwī Abū al-Barakāt departed for his hometown, he said to Hadrat: "Hadrat, give me one of your special items of clothing which you are wearing." Hadrat immediately removed his turban from his head and gave it to him.

Whenever Hājīs returned from the Haramayn, they would come to visit him and present *tasbīhs*, zam-zam water, a *musallā*, and other such items (known as *tabarrukāt*). Hadrat would accept these items very happily and this would make the giver very happy. He would then distribute these items immediately during his assembly. Many of the *khādims* who remained in his service used to ask him for his *tasbīh* and he would give it most happily. He would read on the *tasbīh* a few times – as per the person's request – and hand it over to him. His generosity in this regard was not dependent on the value of the *tasbīh*. A person once came to him and said: "Hadrat, give me one *tasbīh*." He immediately gave him a very beautiful and expensive *tasbīh* and said to him: "You must continue reading on it. It must not remain stored in one place."

Whenever Hadrat distributed the *tabarrukāt* of the Haramayn Sharīfayn, his blessed face would be beaming and happiness and joy could be perceived from his voice. His heart desired that others should also respect such items. Maulwī Husayn Ahmad Sāhib Muhājir Madanī once sent him a drum of zam-zam. The difficulty and care with which it had reached Gangoh is obvious. The moment

it reached Gangoh, Hadrat took it, opened it and started distributing it. The moment he replied to the *salām* of anyone who visited him during that day [on which he received the zam-zam], he would say: "Miyā Maulwī Yahyā! Give him some water to drink as well." I was fortunate enough to visit him on that day and also had the opportunity to drink the *tabarruk*. I observed many visitors arriving and leaving and they all received water – as per Hadrat's instructions.

Soon after that, he related the following story: "There was a Sikh in Delhi who was walking around with a water-skin and calling out: 'I have *sabīl* (cool water), I have *sabīl*.' A villager who had come to Delhi for the first time saw this, and was listening to the racket that the Sikh was making. He did not know what this *sabīl* was. After observing a few other people, he also went and drank some of the water. Coincidentally, a ball of dung entered his mouth. He chewed it and swallowed it [without knowing that it was dung]. When he finished drinking the water, he said: 'You made such a racket and yet I received only one *sabīl*!'" After relating this incident, Hadrat said: "No one can really estimate the true value of this water."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī desired that every Muslim should have such intense love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ that anything which had been exposed to the air and wind of the Haramayn would be more beloved to him than his own life. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib relates: "Hadrat once gave me a piece of candle and asked me to swallow it. On another occasion he gave me a thread from the *ghilāf* (cover) of the Ka'bah and asked me to eat it."

Hadrat was extremely desirous of propagating the *shi'ār* (salient features) of Islam and could never tolerate anyone offering *salām* against the Sunnah. On one occasion a person arrived while Hadrat had gone to the toilet. The newcomer was extremely haughty and audacious. He neither greeted the assembly, nor did he even acknowledge them. He walked past all of them and sat right in

front, near Hadrat's bed. Hadrat completed relieving himself and then approached the assembly. From a distance the newcomer shouted, saying: "Janāb! *Ādāb*." Hadrat responded: "Who is this disrespectful person who does not even know one etiquette of the Sharī'ah?" On another occasion, another person arrived calling: "Hadrat! *Salāmat* (peace)." Anger was clearly visible on Hadrat's face and he said: "We must greet according to the Muslim way of offering *salām*. Who is this person who is saying: 'Hadrat! *Salāmat*'?" The person replied: "I remain in court most of the time and have developed this habit from there." Hadrat said: "Bhāi! This is not a court. I am a poor man."

His overpowering love for following the Sunnah, and his love for Islam – which had both reached its peak in Hadrat's heart – was considered 'bad character' by those who were devoid of love for the Sunnah and ignorant regarding the fruit of such love. If the seed of love was never planted in a heart, how can anyone make such a person understand that these incidents are the essence of the righteousness of the heart. As the saying goes: "It is like crying before the blind and losing one's own eyesight in the process." Oh Allāh! First open the eyes of our hearts and bestow us with Your Love so that, when the laws of our Beloved [Allāh] are disobeyed in the least, we have the ability to feel pain and displeasure. If not – if only proofs are sought – they result in nothing but baseless doubts and we never realize our objectives.

Once we have developed this absolute love, every act which is not dyed with the colour of love will seem to be a mountain – no matter how small and insignificant the act may be – and the pain it will cause us will seem worse than the pain caused by a spear and a musket. The women of Egypt considered Zulaykhā to be a foolish and faint-hearted woman for desiring her slave [Yūsuf 约瑟]. However, when they beheld his beauty, they cut their hands and said:

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

"He is none other than a noble angel."

In a similar manner, this is the case with some of the actions of the pious which we find astounding. May Allāh ﷻ enable us to love such actions. When we are confronted, we often ask why they are so particular about such actions which would not render a Muslim a *kāfir* if he were to omit them? Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's possessed such a high level of love for the Sunnah that he would abhor the casting aside of the Islamic months in favour of the English months, unless it was absolutely necessary. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib was once seated in Hadrat's company when someone asked him: "When are you leaving for Gwalior?" He [Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib] replied: "On such and such date in July." Hadrat expressed with disappointment: "Is there no other month and date to use that you had to resort to using the English month?" This is the reason why you will not find any mention of English or Hindi months in any of Hadrat's writings.

In like manner, his abhorrence for the subjects of logic and philosophy had reached a level of hatred. He said: "Any of my *murīds* who occupies himself with philosophy is not my *murīd* and student." He then related a story: "A Brit, who resided in London, came to Lucknow as a judge. He came to know that there were many '*ulamā*' and that there was great regard for knowledge in the place. He sought the '*ulamā*' and asked each one about his special interest. Each one mentioned logic and philosophy. Upon hearing this, he remained silent. He was then transferred to Delhi, where he also learnt of the numerous '*ulamā*' in the city. He sought them and posed the same question to them. The majority of them also expressed their interest in logic and philosophy. Only one '*ālim*' said that he specialised in *fiqh* (jurisprudence). The Brit was most pleased and said: 'You are the only '*ālim*. Those who are '*ulamā*' of philosophy and logic are '*ulamā*' of this world and not '*ulamā*'

of *Dīn*. We also possess knowledge of this science [philosophy and logic]. In fact, we have more of it than you.” Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to say: “The British study logic and philosophy in the hope of acquiring material benefits.”

This was solely as a result of Hadrat’s ardent and zealous love for the Sunnah. Every hair on his body and every part of his body was pulsing with love for every Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Every pore of his body had become like a tongue which expressed nothing except adherence to the Sharī’ah. He was so intoxicated by this love that every part of his body was calling out:

فَقَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ

“Run towards Allāh.”

فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

“Follow me and Allāh will love you.”

He had acquired unlimited joy through this love, and thus he was constantly calling out هل من مزيد (“Is there more?”). Hadrat gave away his wealth, children, house, comfort, reputation, honour, and even his life for this. Before he would utter any word, he would first consider whether or not it would be in accordance with the Sharī’ah. Before he would raise his eyes to look at anything, he would first ask himself whether or not Rasūlullāh ﷺ had permitted such a look.

May Allāh ﷻ pardon Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmād Marhūm. During his youth he got involved in bad company and became involved in the art of wrestling and other physical sciences. To a slight extent, this caused him to step out of the boundaries of *Dīnī* knowledge and the restrictions of the Sharī’ah. Upon seeing this, Hadrat could not control himself. Love for one’s child is of no consequence

whatsoever when compared to the love for Allāh ﷻ. Hence, why should he bother about his love for his child? Hadrat banished him from his house and sent a message to him, saying: "I do not want to see Mahmūd." When Allāh's ﷻ Grace and Favour Willed to guide him and the time for his reformation arrived, Hadrat called him and said: "Māhmūd! Has the time not arrived for you to come to your senses? Why are you wasting your time trying to make your body strong? Think of the time when your body will become food for the worms and the creatures of your grave. Come to your senses and give up your evil habits."

This concise and comprehensive advice had a great effect on the boy and the same Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad Marhūm became a hāfiz, 'ālim, dhākir (one who engages in *dhikr*) and shāghil (one who engages in other devotional and spiritual practices) within a short space of time. The love which his father then had for him was beyond description. Unfortunately he was not destined to live long. If he had [lived longer], he would certainly have reached a very high level of spirituality. Now, compare the time when Hadrat personally drove him out of the house and out of his sight to the time when he passed away and Hadrat would constantly think of Mahmūd. On one occasion Hadrat said: "Twelve years have passed since Mahmūd's demise and I have not been able to laugh [during this entire period]." In one of his letters, Hadrat wrote: "My son, Mahmūd Ahmad, passed away on the 16th of Jumādā al-Ūlā due to bleeding stools [rectal bleeding]. It is a heart-rending tragedy which I cannot describe. May Allāh ﷻ pardon him. He left behind a two-month-old child. May Allāh ﷻ grant this child a long life so that I may pacify myself through him."

This love was not really for Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad himself, because Mahmūd Ahmad was the same Mahmūd Ahmad at the time when Hadrat had severed relations with him. It was in actual fact his love for good deeds and his love for emulating the Sunnah. He hated his son when the Sunnah could not be found in him, but

once the Sunnah became a part of his life, his love for his son became firmly embedded in his heart.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "A person cannot be a perfect believer until I am more beloved to him than his wealth, children and life." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was put through several tests which tested the perfection of his *īmān* and his love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ – as opposed to his love for his children, wealth and life. *Al-hamdu lillāh!* One will not find a single incident – major or minor – in which his love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ was suppressed, and his love for his wealth, children or himself had gained the upper hand.

It is neither possible for me to encompass all these incidents, nor is it the purpose of this biography. On the basis of *تخلقوا باخلاق الله* (imbibe the character of Allāh ﷻ), I merely wanted to demonstrate that true character – which means total adherence to the Sharī'ah and absolute, unconditional emulation of the Sunnah – had totally consumed Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and that it would be difficult to find anyone equal to him in this regard.

Hadrat had completely devoted himself to total adherence to the Sharī'ah and love for the Sunnah, and it was as if he had handed over the reins of his life to Rasūlullāh ﷺ – who directed him in whichever direction he pleased – and he would stop and restrain himself whenever Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered him to do so. In the following verse:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي

"Say: If you love Allāh, then follow me..."

Allāh ﷻ promises His love to a person who follows Rasūlullāh ﷺ in totality. Hadrat was true to his claim of love for Allāh ﷻ and fulfilled it to the extent where he became a manifestation of the words *موتوا قبل أن تموتوا* ("die before your death comes to you").

Hadrat forfeited all his personal choices, presented his beloved life at the door of Rasūlullāh ﷺ with absolute yearning and love, and sacrificed it in the Name of Allāh ﷻ. Both his body and soul belonged to Allāh ﷻ. His hands and legs — like the other parts of his body — became restricted in the weighty shackle of the Sharī'ah and beyond his control and will.

The world became a prison to him and he had no inkling whatsoever of what 'freedom' was. In other words, he did not know what it was to resort to his personal choice and will.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND PECULIAR TRAITS

Together with an excellent character, Allāh ﷻ had bestowed Hadrat with beautiful physical features rarely seen in others. From head to toe he was extremely handsome. His body parts were well proportioned and attractive and his face was extremely radiant. Because of this, he could be easily recognized in an assembly. He was of average height, his head was of average size, and his hair was soft and pitch black during his early days. He had a broad forehead which was as clear as a mirror and upon which the mark of a true worshipper glittered. His eyebrows were thick, curved like a bow and did not touch each other. He had large eyes which were very modest and the red lines [veins] on the white of his eyes used to glitter. His black pupils appeared distant and remained bright for as long as he had his eyesight. His eye-sockets were brilliant — like the full moon. He had long, lush eyelashes. His cheeks were soft and fleshy. His nose was smooth and slightly long. His lips were wide and slightly red. He had a firm mouth and white teeth that glistened like a string of pearls. His chin was rounded like an apple, and he had a dense beard. His neck used to glitter like a silver flask. His chest was broad and smooth. His hands were well shaped and full, and his palms were large and soft. His fingers were straight and fleshy. His shins were clear and delicate. His feet were also fleshy, and he had a high instep.

His voice was extremely soothing and clear and had a sweet tone. No one would experience any difficulty in understanding what he was saying. He was always smiling, truthful, eloquent and articulate. He was well known for his strength and bravery. He was an 'imām' in the humble and affectionate manner in which he interacted with people. He was always engrossed in *dhikr* and *fikr* (concern and pondering over Allāh ﷻ). He was very intelligent, an efficient planner, correct in his opinions, just, generous, brave, forbearing, patient, chaste, and grateful. He possessed all good qualities and had a natural abhorrence for evil traits.

Hadrat liked a refined character. As a result of abundant *dhikr*, he had become very particular and would be affected by the slightest harmful matter. On one occasion he was walking towards the toilet. When he reached a wild fig tree, he stopped and said: "I am getting the smell of tobacco." Saying this, he continued [walking]. When his *khādim* looked carefully, he saw the juice of the betel-leaf (*pān*) which had been chewed and spat out on the ground and was drying out. He dug it out and cleaned the ground. When Hadrat returned from the toilet, he said: "I am not getting that smell now."

At the same time, Hadrat had the power of great self-control and would remain silent and restrain himself if he felt that he would hurt someone if he should voice his opinion. Alternatively, when it came to one of his devoted *khādims*, he would convey the message in a subtle and tactful way. In doing so, his advice and admonishment would be conveyed while, at the same time, the person would not feel offended. Once a few people were seated nearby him. Their clothes were dirty and drenched in perspiration and this caused a stench to emanate from them. Out of fear of offending them, he could not explicitly say anything to them. He therefore addressed Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib, saying: "Miyā Maulwī Yahyā, you should take a bath occasionally. The perspiration on the body is giving off an offensive smell."

With regard to Hadrat's wonderful tone of voice, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib says: "Upon hearing his recitation of the Qur'ān, his *khutbah* (sermons) etc., I would spontaneously remark:

لقد أوتيت مزامرا من مزامير آل داود

*'You have been blessed with one of the flutes
of the family of Dā'ūd ﷺ.'*

I never heard him recite a poem in a melodious voice. I only heard his melodious voice when he was reciting the Qur'ān during ṣalāh or delivering the *jumu'ah* and 'īd *khutbahs*. Although he used to read a bit fast and flowing, the natural, melodious tone of his voice would make us feel as if his entire body, together with his soul, was falling upon our ears. He was very particular about abstaining from ostentation and pretension in speech. Whenever he ended his recitation, our hearts would desire for him to continue reading. I have heard many people who possessed melodious and pleasing voices, but I can say in all honesty that I have never heard a more pleasing voice than his – not in India or in Arabia.

Hadrat's hand-writing was very neat. Although he used to write with quick strokes, his lines of writing were like lines of pearls or garlands of flowers. Several months would pass during which he would not cut the nib of his [quill] pen, but this would not cause any difference in the beauty of his writing. At present there are numerous hand-written letters and *fatāwā* which people have stored in safe-keeping with great care. I have made a copy of one of his letters and have included it in *Makātib Rashīdiyyah* to serve as an example. Anyone who wishes, may see it in this book.

He used to write in the Nasta'līq script. I did not come across any of his writings written in the Nuskh script. Most of his writings are neat. One of the unique features of his writing is that, even when writing on lengthy topics, he would not use any hyphenation marks.

In most cases, he would continue speaking to those who were present while he was busy writing, answering their questions at the same time. However, this did not affect the style or fluency of the complex topics which he was writing about. He wrote numerous *fatāwā* while he was involved in other matters – yet it seemed as though he had spent a lot of time thinking and pondering over the matter and that he was writing it with absolute focus of mind.

Hadrat was matchless when it came to delivering talks. His speech was concise, yet comprehensive, and a full manifestation of *jawāmi' al-kalim*.⁴ When he delivered a lengthy talk, it was as if a continuous string of pearls flowed from his mouth. Some of his students noted down the lectures which he used to deliver during the course of his Hadīth lessons and have kept these in their possession. Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī, presently residing in Gangoh, as well as Maulānā Mājīd 'Alī Sāhib, a lecturer at Madrasah Riyāsat Mendho, have these notes in their possession. If Allāh ﷻ permits, we will publish these at a later stage.

Hadrat's writing style was just like his speech – concise, yet comprehensive. He would write only that which was essential and absolutely necessary. The letters he wrote, as well as his other writings, bear testimony to this. Those who wish may view them. In addition to writing on *Dīnī* issues, his writings on worldly matters were also unique and matchless. After pledging *bay'ah* [to Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*], he had the opportunity to go to Thānabhawan several times. Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Thānwī's *rahimahullāh* court cases were taking place during those days. When he learnt of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's refined qualities and excellent writing style, he asked him to write down all the

⁴ The Aḥadīth describe Rasūlullāh's ﷺ speech as being *jawāmi' al-kalim* – speech which was concise, yet comprehensive in meaning.

documents related to his court cases. He eventually became tired of writing these documents and managed to evade this task with the help of Hadrat Hāfiz [Dāmin] Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* who conveyed the message to Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib that Hadrat does not go to Thānabhawan for this [type of] work.

Allāh ﷻ bestowed Hadrat with independence and dignity. He did not even show a hint of reliance upon anyone for anything. This was especially evident when it came to his contact with the wealthy and affluent. He used to display absolute independence and self-sufficiency from them. On one occasion a wealthy person came to Hadrat and, because of his sincerity, Hadrat treated him cordially. Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib happened to be present on that day. When the table was laid for lunch and Hadrat sat down with his guest, the Maulwī Sāhib [Hadrat Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib] moved a bit back – assuming that Hadrat may not want him to be with him while he was with his guest. Hadrat saw him moving back and said: “Why are you not sitting forward Maulwī Sāhib?” He replied: “Hadrat, you continue eating, I will eat later on.” Hadrat understood the real reason and said: “I will never allow you not to eat with us. If he [referring to the guest] cannot tolerate eating with you, he can get up and leave. There is nothing which he can give me. As for you ... my life and death are with you.” The moment the Maulwī Sāhib heard this, he moved back onto the *dastarkhwān*, just in case Hadrat continues to speak along this vein and offends the guest.

Those who had come to Hadrat expecting him to honour and flatter them, considered this excellent quality of Hadrat to be pride, whereas there was not even a hint of pride in him. He had placed his forehead before Allāh ﷻ and was dependent only upon Him, and any reliance and dependence upon the creation was thus removed. Maulwī Nūr Muḥammad relates: “During the time when I had the opportunity of going to Gangoh to study Hadīth under Hadrat's tutelage, I noticed that he would consider anyone who

came to him – whether student or traveller – to be his guest for a period of three days. He would seat the person near him on the *dastarkhwān*, or summon for food from his house and feed the person in his presence. When the number of students increased drastically and Hadrat's other occupations also increased, he could no longer pay the same attention to feeding the students as he did to feeding the occasional traveller. However, the three days of hospitality certainly continued.

Once a Punjābī student came and, for some reason or the other, he never received the food which he was supposed to come from Hadrat's house. I had met this student before and thus he expressed his complaint to me. I went to Hadrat and spoke to him in an audacious and angry tone, saying: 'Are the students not our guests? Is it only others who are guests? Why is it that when other guests come here you feed them yourself, while you hand over the responsibility of feeding these poor students to others and then you do not even check whether the food from your house has reached them or not?'

I felt very ashamed of my disrespectful behaviour and regretted it. In my anger, I said things which I should not have said. After hearing my outburst, Hadrat remorsefully lowered his head and apologized to a worthless student like me, saying: 'It is certainly my mistake. *Inshā Allāh*, you will not see this happening in the future.' Ever since that day, I never saw Hadrat delegating the responsibility of seeing to the guests [students and travellers] to even the most reliable and dependable person. He would personally feed everyone who arrived. Upon seeing Hadrat's selflessness and total devotion to Allāh ﷻ, I was convinced he was a Shaykh of the highest category."

When the doors of education were opened and the *daurah* Hadīth commenced, there used to be fifty students at a time in the *daurah* class. They came from different countries. There used to be all

types of students – intelligent, weak-minded, capable and incapable. Hadrat's character with his students was such that – no matter how incorrect a student would read the text, no matter how long it took him to understand the lesson, and no matter how much time he wasted in asking unnecessary questions – Hadrat would never become displeased and irritated with him nor would he ever stop him. You would, most probably, never come across anyone with such a style of teaching anywhere else. In reality, Hadrat practised fully on Rasūlullāh's ﷺ instruction:

فاستوصوا بهم خيرا

"Desire good for them."

Hadrat's humbleness and unassuming nature was of such a level that he would ask ordinary Muslims to make *du'ā'* for him. He used to say: "I have hope of attaining salvation on the basis of people's good thoughts about me." You will find these words in countless of his letters: "You must most certainly include me in your *du'ā'* and I pray that Allāh ﷻ will treat me as per your good thoughts about me."

Maulānā Hakīm Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib wrote to Hadrat about his personal condition and complained to him saying: "I am not experiencing any benefit and good effect. I feel like leaving everything aside." Hadrat consoled him and said: "Miyā! Continue with whatever you are doing and do not lose courage. Who is it who taught you to cast aside something which you are doing? No matter what you are doing, it is better than doing nothing." He said: "Hadrat, how can I be at rest when I can see no effect upon my heart?" Hadrat's eyes welled with tears and he said in a heart-rending voice: "O Allāh's servant! You do not have confidence in someone who is elder than you? Don't you see that I am living solely on the good thoughts which ordinary Muslims have about me?"

Makātīb Rashīdiyyah contains a letter which Hadrat had written to Hakīm 'Abd al-'Azīz Khān. Hadrat wrote: "I take an oath upon the All-Encompassing Knowledge of Allāh ﷻ that I certainly make *du'ā'* for you every day, except during the five prescribed times. However, I am most perturbed by your good thoughts about me and feel that your conviction in me is misplaced. There are countless people in this world who are like me – and far better than me. Due to my condition, it should become clear to you that I make *du'ā'* for you by night and by day. There are no special signs of acceptance which could make me believe that I am anything but an ordinary believer, just like the rest of the believers. No person is displeased by praises which are showered upon him. I constantly express my faults so that you may not miss your goal because of me and so that your confidence in me should not be detrimental to you. A person who remains with a defective person will find himself at a disadvantage. Furthermore, when my condition is exposed on the Day of Resurrection, I will not regret it being exposed contrary to my expectation..."

From the above-quoted letter, the true nature of Hadrat's humility and firmness of heart will become clear to the reader. I am not able to display the perfection of every word which he had written. In *Makātīb Rashīdiyyah* numerous examples can be found which portray this lofty quality which Hadrat possessed. It is an accepted fact that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's admirers and critics were the same to him. The more the people served, loved and respected him, the more his humility increased. He would make this *du'ā'*: "O Allāh! You know full well how worthless I am, but treat me according to these people's good thoughts of me."

Hadrat was totally devoid of formalities, pomp and show. He was extremely simple and liked simplicity. Despite his humility and modesty, Allāh ﷻ had endowed him with an awe-inspiring personality. This prevented even his close *khādims* – who were fully conversant with his moods – from speaking to him in an

informal or nonchalant way. Those who became his *khādims* were soon filled with love for him. This love reached such an extent that it caused them to become totally aloof from the world and they remained completely devoted to Hadrat. No one ever saw him beating any person or being abusive towards anyone. His face reflected a certain air of authority which caused all those who were present to fall into silence. Many senior people in positions of authority presented themselves before him and were left speechless.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib writes: "When I got married in 1298 A.H., my father invited Shaykh Ghulām Muḥīyy ad-Dīn of Meerut – the eldest son of Hāfiz 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib who was the mayor of Lālkurī. He attended my wedding and went to Gangoh as well. Hadrat had performed my *nikāh*. When he left the assembly, Shaykh Sāhib joined him. On one occasion he said to me: 'I have met many pious personalities and many senior people of authority and was always able to speak to them freely, but I have not come across the awe and reverence which Hadrat's presence commands. I would have liked to say something, but did not have the courage to say it. The most I could do was to summon the courage to present a gift to him.'" Shaykh Sāhib was well-known for his high-mindedness, and this is a very definitive testimony in Hadrat's favour.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was extremely perceptive and there are numerous incidents that portrays this unique perception. Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib wrote that Bhāi 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Sāhib used to relate: "I used to like tea a lot and used to prepare it myself. Whenever Hadrat drank the tea, he would say that he was getting the taste of water in it. One day, while I was preparing the tea, I thought to myself that I will boil it until all the water has evaporated. I boiled it for a long time and when it was ready, I presented it to Hadrat. He said: 'There is a taste of water in this as well.' I said: 'Hadrat, I think you are imagining it.' The thought then crossed my mind that I had brought the milk from home and

that it had been left aside. It was possible that someone may have added some water to the milk. I went home and enquired and found out that someone had indeed added some water to it."

Maulwī Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Madanī was once pouring tea from one cup to another in an effort to cool it. Ḥadrat said: "From the shine in the tea it seems it is now cool enough to drink."

There was a time when Maulwī Ḥabīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib Deobandī was responsible for preparing Ḥadrat's tea. He served tea to Ḥadrat for several days and on each occasion Ḥadrat said: "I am getting the smell of un-boiled water." The Maulwī Sāhib boiled the tea as much as he could, but Ḥadrat said the same thing each time. He became very distressed because he was definitely boiling the water and he was even adding boiling water to it. How could the water possibly be un-boiled? After giving it a lot of thought, he realized that the cup in which the tea was poured had not been dried after it had been washed. Thus, on that day he washed the cup, dried it with a cloth, poured the tea into it, and presented it to Ḥadrat. He drank it and said: "There is no smell of un-boiled water today."

Ḥadrat's guests used to have their meals in the *seh darī*. Whenever mealtime was over, the *dastarkhwān* (table mat) would be carried away and the straw mats which were beneath it would be swept clean. Despite this, whenever Ḥadrat arrived in the *seh darī*, he would accurately say: "I am getting the smell of such and such food." On one occasion, while he was eating, he said: "I am getting the smell of fresh coriander leaves in this food." Everyone reflected over this but no one else could smell it. Upon further inquiry they discovered that four or five coriander leaves had been added to the food while it was still being cooked.

People have witnessed numerous incidents which clearly displays his astounding perception. Those who did not witness these incidents would probably never believe it. Once, after a *jumu'ah*

salāh, a large group of people had gathered around Hadrat. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib's younger brother, Maulwī Muḥammad Ilyās⁵ – who was about ten years old at the time – entered silently and sat down in one corner. Hadrat raised his head immediately and said: "I perceive a child's breathing." Someone then informed him saying: "Hadrat, it is Muḥammad Ilyās."

Once Nambardār Fadl-e-Haqq's son, Ikrām al-Haqq, was present after the *maghrib salāh*. Hadrat did not know exactly who were present. As he was proceeding towards his house for supper, he passed close to Ikrām al-Haqq and stopped. He said: "I am getting a whiff of Nambardār." Someone informed Hadrat of Nambardār's son's presence.

Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib relates: "For quite some time I had the habit of placing my head on Hadrat's pillow and lying down while Hadrat was at his house. The moment I would hear Hadrat's approach, I would get up. This happened once or twice, but Hadrat did not say anything. Then, one day, when he placed his head on the pillow and lay down, he said: 'I am getting the whiff of a child.' I never placed my head on his pillow again after that day."

In short, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had been bestowed with both physical beauty and excellent character. He was the embodiment of excellence and no matter how one looked at him – whether from the inside or the outside – one would be left astounded. Any person who possessed insightful knowledge and sound temperament who would meet Hadrat – no matter which part of the day or night – would be compelled to remark: "This is not a human. This is a noble angel." In like manner, anyone in possession of outward discernment would be captivated by Hadrat's outward beauty during each of the four cycles of his life – childhood, youth,

⁵ He is none other than Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*, the initiator of the *Tablīghī Jamā'at*.

middle-age and old age.

*I have traversed this world
and witnessed many amazing sights.
Many of these sights can only be dreamt of,
but nothing compares to you [my beloved].*

HABITS AND PRACTICES

*Every human being is involved in the occupation of the world,
whereas you are involved in the best of occupations ...
[preparation for the Hereafter].*

*Remain aloof from Najd and Najdī friends
so that ecstasy may be experienced within the walls of your home.
To remember the Beloved is most pleasurable to the lover ...
Like the story which is told [of Layla and Majnūn]
and you will become like them [if you should remember Him].*

A habit refers to something which man does all the time, or most of the time, by virtue of his temperament. Actions which are carried out by an obedient Muslim, in compliance with the Order of Allāh ﷻ, in obedience to Him, and for His Pleasure, are termed 'ibādāt (acts of worship). Actions which are not carried out with the above intentions are termed 'ādat (habits). However, we learnt from the previous discussion that, when the hearts of the special servants of Allāh ﷻ are ignited by the light of prophethood, the desire to acquire Allāh's Pleasure becomes firmly embedded in their hearts and a constant consciousness of Allāh ﷻ is established. These two factors serve as a warning to them before they initiate any action with their limbs, saying: "Beware! Remain a servant and do not use this [limb] for anyone other than Allāh ﷻ." Thus, when we speak about a pious personality and refer to a certain action of his as an act of worship, and another action as a habit, the difference between the two actions lie merely in its appearance.

In reality, such personalities have neither a choice nor a will. Whatever we see in their lives is either an '*ibādah*' or a means to an '*ibādah*'. Since the means to an '*ibādah*' is also an '*ibādah*', every activity or inactivity of theirs is either an intended '*ibādah*' ('*ibādat-e-maqsūdah*') or an unintended '*ibādah*' ('*ibādat-e-ghayr maqsūdah*'). This does not mean that the *auliyā*' of Allāh ﷻ do not commit sins. Allāh ﷻ Forbid! It can never mean this.

Apart from the Prophets ﷺ, all humans are prone to sin. Even the *Sahābah* رضي الله عنهم – the chiefs of all the *auliyā*' – committed sins, let alone the rest of the *auliyā*'. When the *nafs* is overpowered due to human constraints, the person is certainly classified as a sinner. However, upon committing a sin, the essential aspect of *īmān* – which is known as *nisbat* – immediately comes to attention, and when the illuminated and vigilant heart notices this black spot [of sinning], it trembles, recoils, repents, expresses remorse, cries and beseeches. Thus, even the sins of these personalities are manifestations of Allāh's ﷻ quality of Forgiveness. Their sins therefore become the means to repentance and additional fear, and thereby become the cause of their elevation in rank and proximity to Allāh ﷻ.

In short, the habits ('*ādāt*') of the *Ahlullāh* are certainly enumerated in their '*ibādāt*'. From morning to night, all their activities – be it sleeping, wakefulness, eating, drinking, relieving themselves, remaining silent, speaking, resting, working, moving, remaining stationary, and so forth – are a means towards an act of '*ibādah*' and are therefore included among their acts of obedience.

Since *Hadrat Imām Rabbānī* was the chief among this pure group during this century, it is crystal clear that all his habits were acts of '*ibādah*'. Emulation of the *Sunnah* – which is accepted as the essential aspect of '*ibādah*' – could be symbolically referred to as the 'heading', and the actions of *Hadrat Imām Rabbānī*'s body parts and limbs as the 'detailed elaboration on the heading'. Thousands of people had the opportunity to meet him and to remain in his

company. Not a single person can say that a certain act of his was beyond the four boundaries of the Sharī'ah. His emulation of the Sharī'ah had become completely natural and effortless and therefore he would not do anything against the Sharī'ah – not even through inattention. Since his emulation of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in every action, as well as his submission to him [his ﷺ teachings], was solely for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, we would not be wrong in saying that his entire life was an act of 'ibādah. He had acquired a very high level of unwavering constancy in his obedience to the Sharī'ah and thus he would not omit a *mandūb* (recommended) act, or commit a *makrūh* act, without a valid Shar'ī reason – not even by mistake.

From dawn until dusk, each of Hadrat's verbal utterances and actions were certainly either for the benefit of people or for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. If we were to label that which he did for the benefit of people as 'ādāt (habits), and that which he did for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ as 'ibādāt (acts of worship), this superficial distinction would make it possible for us to differentiate between his 'ādat and 'ibādāt. However, if we were to determine that benefitting the people is also done solely for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, then it would become difficult to distinguish between 'ādat and 'ibādāt. After all, a minister in the royal court would consider it an honour to serve the subjects of his king and his service to the subjects would certainly be a means of gaining proximity to his king. Hadrat's vigilant heart understood that the purpose of life was servitude to Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, servitude had become his 'ādat and obedience had become his practice (*ma'mūl*).

*If your heart desires freedom and life,
then worship Allāh ... and worship ... and worship.
The true purpose of life is to worship Allāh.
A life without worship is [utterly] shameful.*

*Besides worship, humility, and a restless yearning for Allāh,
nothing else is considered [worthy] by Hadrat [a Sufi].
For every person who desires a life of Divine Love,
it is kufr (disbelief) if he should not worship.*

*He should generate the desire [within his heart]
towards every type of obedience ...
Every beautiful tree sprouts from a mere seed.*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's day-to-day activities were witnessed by all those who were present and heard of by those who were absent. He was neither employed by anyone nor was he bound to anyone's authority. His total reliance upon Allāh ﷻ freed him from the need to earn a livelihood, and positioned him as a supervisor and guide to the creation. He subjugated himself to the Qur'ānic command: "*Devote yourself to Him, staying aloof from everyone else*" (Sūrah al-Muzzammil, 73: 8) and remained fully engrossed in guiding and tutoring the creation. His practices, which were actually the result of his steadfastness and dedication to *Dīn*, are thus described by Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib:

"Whenever I had the honour of presenting myself before him, I found his *ma'mūl* (practice) as follows: After the *fajr salāh* he would remain in solitude until about 9:00 a.m. during which time he would be engrossed in *dhikr* and *fikr* (remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and reflecting over Him). He would then perform *nafl salāh* and commence his lessons with his students. Initially he used to teach the Islamic sciences, namely *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *usūl* (principles), *tafsīr*, and Hadīth. Towards the latter part of his life he confined himself to teaching only the Sihāh Sittah (the six most authentic collections of Aḥādīth). When he lost his eyesight, he stopped teaching totally and the doors to instruction and investigation were opened wider.

If, in the midst of teaching, any sick person would arrive and ask

him for medicine, he would interrupt his lesson and prescribe it for him. He never studied medicine under any teacher, nor did he learn medical practices and rules from any doctor. However, he had an extremely sharp mind and strong memory. He perused through a few medical books, opened his medical practice, and – Glory to Allāh ﷻ – surpassed experienced physicians in this field. Initially he had a formal medical consulting room. Later on he stopped examining urine samples because his delicate temperament could not tolerate this. His diagnosis depended solely upon asking the patient to describe his condition and checking the patient's pulse.

When his son, Hāfiz Maulwī Hakīm Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib, returned from Delhi after qualifying as a medical practitioner (hakīm), Hadrat gave up consulting completely and spent more and more time in teaching.

Upon completion of the morning's lessons, Hadrat would reply to letters and answer questions which were sent to him. It was his habit to reply to all letters and questions without delay. He used to receive countless letters and questions. Only someone of his calibre could reply to all of these and still fulfill his other responsibilities for the day. For as long as his eyesight permitted, he personally wrote all the replies and answers. When he lost his eyesight, Maulwī Muhammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī started to write letters and *fatāwā* on his behalf.

Once he had completed writing the replies and answers, he would have lunch, take a siesta (*qaylūlah*) and rest for a short while. After the *zuhr salāh* he would recite the Qur'ān while reading the text, but when he lost his eyesight he started reciting from memory. He would then continue teaching until '*asr salāh*. A general assembly (*majlis*) would be held from '*asr* until *maghrib*. Depending on the situation, he would offer words of advice, relate stories of the elders, and guide and instruct the masses and the elite in this way. After the *maghrib salāh* he would perform *awwābīn salāh* and

proceed to his house. He would take a rest after '*ishā salāh*, wake up whenever Allāh ﷻ Willed, fulfil his personal needs and then occupy himself in *tahajjud*. In the beginning he used to perform eight *rak'ats*, but his practice towards the end of his life was to perform ten *rak'ats*. His *rak'ats* used to be lengthy and contained a lot of Qur'ān recitation. He would complete the optional *salāh* before dawn. If he felt tired, he would lie down for a short while. If not, he would remain occupied in *dhikr* and *fikr*. This remained his practice until the end. However, his engrossment in '*ibādah* – especially during the night – used to increase drastically during the month of Ramadān.

In his personal life he displayed piety and precaution to a very high degree. When it came to matters in which there were differences of opinion, he would follow the preferred opinion which was closest to caution. Even in times of need he would never waive the cautious opinion. Here is a small example of his caution: During all his various illnesses and sicknesses – no matter how severe the illness may have been – he never sat down to perform his *salāh*. During his final illness, he would stand to perform his *salāh* with the support of two people for as long as he was still able to stand. [This is how he used to perform it]: Two or three people would carry him with much difficulty. He would stand up while two of them stood on either side of him with their hands around his waist. His standing, bowing and prostrating postures would all be performed by taking support from them. His attendants would constantly ask him to sit and perform his *salāh*, but he would neither reply to them nor accede to their request.

On one occasion, Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* asked him: '*Ḥadrat!* If it is not permissible to sit and perform *salāh* – even in such a situation – then when, and in which condition is it permissible to sit and perform *salāh*?' He replied: 'According to Imām Sāhib [Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*] a person is considered to be 'able' if he is able to perform an act with the

support of others. Since I have friends who carry me and help me to perform ṣalāh, how can I sit and perform ṣalāh?’

When he eventually became so weak that he could not even perform ṣalāh standing with the support of others, he performed a few ṣalāh while sitting. In so doing, he demonstrated the real meaning of following the Sharī’ah, and the real definition of *taqwā*. This is an example of how one ought to choose the most cautious option [or opinion].

When it came to clothes, Hadrat wore both types. Sometimes he wore extremely course clothing, while at other times he wore shawls of a very high and fine quality. However, both were equal in his eyes. He neither disliked the cheap quality nor did he desire the fine quality. Since his natural temperament was one of fineness and excellence, he used to abhor unclean and soiled clothes. He used to take a bath every day.

He never feared the criticism of any critic when it came to expounding the truth. In fact, it would please him immensely if people spoke ill of him for defending the truth. There was a time when he issued a *fatwā* on the permissibility of domestic crows. The ignoramuses responded with a clamour and spoke out against him for issuing such a *fatwā*. He made the following statement several times: ‘I did not know that Allāh ﷻ would reward me so much for saying what I said.’

Hadrat was a pillar of forbearance. A matter which was against his temperament would not cause any change in his mood. Some *bid’atīs* wrote letters to him in which they cursed him and hurled abuses at him. Hadrat immediately tore up the letters. When his *khādims* insisted that he must show the letters to them, he replied: ‘If my friends were to see these letters they would be pained.’”
[Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad’s article ends here.]

I present another article which describes Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's continuous habits and ongoing practices. It has been written by Hadrat's illustrious student and *mujāz Tarīqah* (*khalīfah*), Shaykh Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muḥammad Is-ḥāq Sāhib Nahtaurī:

"From morning to night his noble habits were as follows: After the *fajr ṣalāh* he would proceed to his private room and remain occupied in *dhikr*, *fikr* and *murāqabah*. This would continue until 9:00 a.m. during wintertime, and between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. during summertime. After fulfilling his personal needs, he would perform a fresh *wuḍū'* and perform the *ishrāq* and *chāshṭ ṣalāhs* – either four or eight *rak'ats*. At times, he would perform *ishrāq ṣalāh* in his private room and exit his room to perform *chāshṭ ṣalāh* at about 11:00 a.m. After completing *salāt ad-duḥā* – which includes *chāshṭ* and *ishrāq* – he would commence teaching. His Hadīth lessons would last for about two hours. He would then have lunch and adjust his watch at 12:00 a.m. according to the sundial. Thereafter he would have a siesta (*qaylūlah*) until 1:00 p.m. during wintertime, and 1:30 p.m. during summertime. He would complete performing his *zuhr ṣalāh* by 1:30 p.m. during the winter season, and 2:00 p.m. during the summer season. This was followed by Qur'ān recitation. He would review letters, reply to them, and issue *fatāwā* after *salāt ad-duḥā*, before commencing teaching. If this task was not completed during that time, he would complete it after his Qur'ān recitation or after the '*asr ṣalāh*."

He was in the habit of taking a bath before *zuhr ṣalāh* during summertime. At times he would take another bath just before '*asr*. His Qur'ān recitation was followed by teaching Hadīth until '*asr*. After '*asr* he would hold a *tasbīḥ* in his hand and turn towards the students. At this point some would ask their questions, others would describe their personal conditions to him, while others would remain occupied in *murāqabah*.

After the *maghrib ṣalāh* he would perform six *rak'ats* of *awwābīn*

during which he would recite between half and one *pārā/juz* of the Qur'ān. Upon completing this *nafl ṣalāh*, he would remain outside his room for some time and converse with the guests who were present. Thereafter he would proceed to his house, have supper and return before the '*ishā adhān*'. While waiting for the '*ishā adhān*', he would address his visitors and others who were present. At times he would lie down, while at other times he would sit down. He would commence the '*ishā ṣalāh*' at 9:00 p.m. during wintertime and 10:00 p.m. during summertime. If several *musallīs* had already gathered, he would not delay in the *ṣalāh* – especially not this ['*ishā*] *ṣalāh*. He did not intend setting aside a specific time for the '*ishā ṣalāh*'. After the '*ishā ṣalāh*' he would lie down for a short while. At about 11:00 p.m. his special *khādims* would massage his legs. Some of his special associates used to have unique and strange experiences during this time. He would give leave to all of them after 11:00 p.m., or at the latest 11:30 p.m. He would then rest for as long as it was destined for him until he would wake up.

Upon waking, he would carry out all his personal tasks by himself. He did not like anyone's help and service at this time. He would perform *tahajjud*, during which he would prolong his recitation in an audible and sweet tone. His times of waking varied. At times, he would not sleep at all. Once he gave leave to his attendants and was sure that they were all asleep, he would get up and perform *nafl ṣalāh* with the same *wudū'* which he had performed his '*ishā*'. If he felt tired, he would sit down and take a nap. He would then resume his *nafl ṣalāh* and this would continue until the morning. Although he possessed complete self-control, he would occasionally be overcome with emotion and intense weeping which would continue throughout the night. He would then perform the *fajr ṣalāh* at the beginning or middle of *isfār* (when it is sufficiently bright).

His *fard ṣalāh* used to be short but complete. He would rarely read Sūrahs apart from the Sūrahs of the 30th *pārā/juz*. During the *fajr ṣalāh* he would read any sūrah from Sūrah an-Naba' to Sūrah al-

Balad. During the *'ishā salāh* he would mostly read from Sūrah *ad-Duhā* to Sūrah al-'Ādiyāt. During the *maghrib salāh* he would read from Sūrah al-Qāri'ah till the end of the Qur'ān – reading the short Sūrahs most of the time. During the *fard salāh* he would read his *tasbīhs* in *rukū'* and *sajdah* five times, and he would not read the *du'ā's* of the *qaumah* and *jalsah*. These *du'ā's* were read during his *nafl salāhs*.

During these day and night activities, he would see to the sick without setting aside any specific time for them. If any sick person came to him while he was a little occupied, he would see to him, prescribe a simple medication and give him leave. He would rarely write down a prescription or prescribe a compound medication. Most of the sick people used to be cured through his blessings. He would provide a simple treatment, even for complicated and lengthy illnesses. Patients with all types of illnesses used to be cured.

This was his practice during most of the year. As for the month of Ramadān ... he would leave his private room late in the morning. During summertime he would leave his room at 10:00 a.m. He would spend more of his time occupied in Qur'ān recitation, performing *nafl salāh*, remaining silent, and in *murāqabah*. He would drastically reduce his sleeping and resting periods, and he would speak very little. After the *maghrib salāh* he would remain in solitude for a short while, whereafter he would have his supper. In the beginning he used to personally perform the twenty *rak'ats* of *tarāwīh salāh*, but later on he performed it together with his son, Maulwī Hāfiz, Hakīm Muhammad Mas'ūd Ahmad Sāhib, as the imām. After the *witr salāh* he would perform a lengthy *salāh* of two *rak'ats*. Sometimes he would perform this *salāh* while standing, and at other times he would perform it while sitting. He would then remain seated while facing towards the *qiblah* for a long time and continue reading something. He would then perform a *sajdah-e-tilāwat* after which he would stand up. I heard some of the words

which he was reading and deduced that he was reading Sūrahs al-Mulk, Sajdah and ad-Dukhān. In most cases he used to keep the fasts of the first ten days of Dhū al-Hijjah, 'Āshūrā', and the 15th of Sha'bān.

CHARACTER

He would never become angry for personal reasons, but would become enraged when the laws of the Sharī'ah were transgressed. If anyone – due to his own misfortune – treated him in an abusive manner, it did not bother him in the least and there would be no change whatsoever in his expression. If anyone praised him, he did not experience any joy, nor would there be any change in his expression. He was never in the habit of taking oaths. If, through his *kashf* or insight, he deduced that a person who was offering him a gift was in fact a needy person, he would refuse the gift in a manner which would not offend the giver. I personally experienced this on certain occasions. In like manner, he would not accept a gift from a boaster or from a person who was not genuinely inclined towards him. However, he would gladly accept the gifts of sincere people. After he lost his eyesight, he utilized the time which used to be allocated to teaching for reflection and meditation (*murāqabah*). His physical occupation [and mental preoccupation] in this regard increased drastically. Upon observation, it seemed as if he disliked anyone speaking to him or asking him a question during the time he had set aside for this. Then again, there were times when it seemed as if he was desirous of engaging in conversation.

After observing his blessed assembly closely, I found it to be an example of the blessed assembly of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. No one would speak unnecessarily in his assembly. Whenever he spoke, everyone would remain silent and listen attentively. If anyone asked him a question, all the others would remain silent while he answered the question. There was never any noise, clamour, and futile conversations in his assembly. In most instances, his assembly

comprised of the following: (1) discussing certain *masā'il* (plural of *mas'alah*), (2) investigating a certain Hadīth or Qur'ānic verse, (3) expounding on a certain issue related to *tasawwuf*, and (4) relating anecdotes from the lives of the *awliyā'* and '*ulamā'*'. Criticizing another person, or backbiting anyone, never took place in his assembly. There were some ignoramuses – due to their own misfortune – who were openly antagonistic towards him, but they were never discussed in his assembly. If anyone made mention of such a person, Hadrat would stop him immediately and change the topic of discussion. Since people only spoke when necessary, those who were present would remain silent and motionless most of the time *كان على رؤسهم الطير* (as though birds were seated upon their heads).⁶

His assembly was filled with blessings, effulgence and goodness, and totally devoid of mischief and waywardness. Since Hadrat used to remain in *wudū'* all the time, those who attended his assembly would also remain in *wudū'* and turn their attention towards Allāh ﷻ with fear. Some of the attendees would remain engaged in silent verbal *dhikr*, while others would engage in *dhikr* with their hearts. Some would remain in reflection and meditation, while others – like myself – would anxiously wait for Hadrat to say something or to answer a person's question. Even ordinary people, who did not attend for any special purpose, would experience the blessings of his assembly. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Blessings upon him and his followers, and include us amongst them." [Shaykh Maulānā Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī's description ends here.]

It was not Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's habit to talk and converse too much. He was living proof of emulating the Sunnah with regard to speaking less and engaging in excessive *dhikr*, while bearing in

⁶ These are the words mentioned in the Hadīth, describing how the Sahābah ﷺ used to sit in Rasūlullāh's ﷺ assembly.

mind the limitations in this regard. Rarely would you find someone with such a quality. He used to remain fully occupied in *dhikr* to the extent of even engaging in it when going to the Musjid and returning from it. If his eyes were to suddenly open during his sleep, he would involuntarily utter the *kalimah* or *istighfār*.

He could not tolerate listening to a conversation in which there was no *Dīnī* benefit. If anyone asked him a question, or said something to him, and he felt that the person was saying more than what was necessary, he would stop the person and say: "Very well, what is the benefit of this story? Tell me only what is essential." He totally abhorred futile and pointless conversations. Apart from the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ and conversations of *Dīnī* benefit, he did not like his *khādims* to get involved in other matters.

Maulānā Sirāj Aḥmad Sāhib wanted Hadrat to provide an answer to Maulwī Aḥmad Radā Sāhib's vulgar and abusive statements. He tried his utmost to obtain Hadrat's explicit, or even implicit approval in this regard, but Hadrat persistently said to him: "Miyā! What is the need to repeat all those stories? There is no benefit in writing a reply. It is a waste of time. There is no hope in his accepting [what we have to say]." Whenever his *khādims* wanted to send replies [to such abusive statements], he would stop them saying: "Imagine how much a person would benefit if he were to spend the time which he would have spent in writing against someone, in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ!"

He was extremely desirous of the tutelage and rectification of his *khādims* and, for that reason, he was never heedless and inattentive of it. His simplicity was of such a level that, if someone offered to massage his legs, he would not refuse. If no one offered, he would not request anyone to do so. He did not like anyone to help him when preparing for 'ibādah during the last part of the night. However, if any sincere *khādim* assumed the responsibility of bringing a filled water canister, a *miswāk*, and so forth, and keeping

it ready for his *wuḍū'*, he would not refuse [his assistance]. If a *khādim* did not wake up on a particular day, he would not wait for him [to bring these items].

Sayyid Sufī Karam Husayn Sāhib relates: "I had assumed this responsibility at some point in my life. Coincidentally, I woke up late one night. I got up in a rush, proceeded to the *khānqāh*, and saw Hadrat performing *wuḍū'*. I regretted my neglect, my failure to fulfil my responsibility, and the fact that I had caused Hadrat to make his own preparations. I remained standing there in silence. With particular affection Hadrat said to me: 'Miyā! What is there to worry about? I am a human, and people oversleep at times.'"

It was his peculiar habit to be meticulous about the *mustahabbāt* and *ādāb* (the desirable acts and etiquette) in the different acts of *'ibādāt*. He would personally lead the people in *ṣalāh*. He did not ever extend the offer to any guest to go forward and lead the congregation in *ṣalāh* – as is the habit with imāms in general. However, whenever his teacher's son, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, visited him, he would send him forward and follow him in *ṣalāh*.

He was refined by nature and thus preferred taking a daily bath before *zuhr ṣalāh*. During summertime, he would take a second bath after *'ishā ṣalāh*. It was his continuous habit to perform the *jumu'ah ṣalāh* with the *wuḍū'* he which had performed while taking a bath on that day. Of all the things he liked, and out of all the things he was attached to, *ṣalāh* was the most beloved to him. I do not think that I have ever come across anyone else who paid such attention to *ṣalāh*. A monthly calendar – showing the sunrise and sunset times – was always kept at his bedside, and it would be changed on the first of every solar month. Apart from this calendar, one would never find him using English dates.

There were several watches and clocks in his room which would be

adjusted daily according to the sundial. If one stopped working, the others were there to show him the time. A sundial was erected in the room in front of the *seh darī*. As long as he possessed his eyesight, he would personally see to adjusting all the other watches according to the sundial at exactly 12:00 a.m. Later [when he lost his eyesight], this responsibility was given to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Ṣāhib. Very often we noticed that Ḥadrat would not be able to sleep until the watches had not been adjusted according to the sundial. He would either remain seated or, if he was lying down, he would remain restless – tossing and turning – and would constantly ask: “What is the time? Is it twelve o’clock or not?” The calendar, which was hanging by his bedside, also included the times indicating *mithlayn* (when the sun’s shadow is twice the size of an object) and the disappearance of the *shafaq* (the redness in the sky which marked the end of *maghrib* time). He would perform his ṣalāh exactly according to the Ḥanafī times. Due to the daily time changes of a minute or two, his ṣalāh times would also be adjusted daily.

Even if his clothes were of a cheap quality, he liked it to be clean and neat. This was especially the case when he stood up to perform ṣalāh. He would wear the best clothes he possessed whenever he performed ṣalāh. He used to say: “The Allāh-bestowed bounties ought to be on our bodies when we present ourselves in His Court.” This was in emulation of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ instruction:

فَلْيَرَأِ أثرَ نِعْمَتِهِ عَلَيْكَ

“Let Allāh ﷻ see the effects of His Bounties upon you.”

Ḥadrat did not dislike the *halāl* and tasty bounties of Allāh ﷻ. He ate both simple food and the most exotic dishes. He never restricted himself to any particular food, nor did he pay any particular attention to a certain type of food. However, he really liked cool water and special arrangements for it used to be made in the

khānqāh. In summertime, a water-skin would be hung from the wild fig tree, and the easiest methods of cooling water would be adopted. He used to be overjoyed after drinking cool water. He would say: "This is a very great bounty. Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to like cool water a lot. This is why he made this *du'ā'*:"

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ مَالِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنْ الْمَاءِ
الْبَارِدِ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ.

"O Allāh! Make Your Love and the love of those who love You more beloved to me than my wealth, my family, and more beloved than cool water."

Hadrat also had a special liking for *rotī* (flat round bread) and gravy because of the fact that it digests quickly and is not heavy on the stomach – which would cause one to feel lethargic and lazy to perform *'ibādah*.

Hadrat had a particular liking for perfume. He would use all types of *'itr* (perfume) with enthusiasm, especially *gulāb* (rose). On one occasion, he addressed Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī, saying: "Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib used to like *gulāb* a lot. Do you know why?" He replied: "Hadrat, probably because a weak Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh's ﷺ blessed perspiration is made of *gulāb*." Hadrat said: "Although it is a weak Hadīth, it is nevertheless a Hadīth."

Initially, if anyone insisted that he should have *pān* (betel leaf), he would chew it. But, when he lost his teeth later on in life, he was never seen chewing *pān* again. He considered the lime in *pān* to be permissible, but he probably exercised personal caution. He used to drink tea, but not habitually. If anyone offered it to him, he would drink it. If it was not offered to him, he neither asked for it nor asked anyone to prepare it for him. Very often he would be seen drinking tea for several weeks at a time. Then, out of the blue, he

would suddenly stop and would not even desire it when the normal tea-time arrived. A person once asked him: "Hadrat! Is it prohibited to blow in a liquid [to cool it] before drinking it?" He replied: "Yes, but you receive the full benefit of tea when you have it hot."

Hadrat's preference for sweet foods was one of the consequences of the 'sweetness of *īmān*'. The amount of sugar which a normal person would consider to be sufficient in milk or tea, would be highly insufficient according to Hadrat. Amongst all the types of fruit, he liked mangoes and *Ilāhābādī* guavas, but he would not eat more than one or two slices of it. He also liked sweet loquats and soft peaches. In general, he did not dislike any seasonal fruit. If it was placed in front of him and he felt like eating it, he would eat it. If not, he would continue with whatever work he was doing without bothering about it.

Even after he lost his eyesight, it was not his habit to allow someone to hold his walking stick and lead him along or show him the way. In the beginning he managed to find his way on his own by holding another stick in his hand which he used to poke around in order to find his way.

He was never in the habit of laughing with his mouth wide open. The most he would do was to smile slightly. The fear of Allāh ﷻ had completely overpowered him, and thus he would always appear to be worried and concerned. At the same time, his smiling expression, radiant face and courtesy caused him to relate stories to his listeners which would reduce them to laughter. Humorous anecdotes, which would cause others to laugh until their stomachs ached would merely bring a smile to his face, and sometimes it would have no effect on him whatsoever.

His simple way of speaking was unique, and it would reduce even those people with great self-control to laughter. No one would be able to describe the special enjoyment and delight one would

one story which Hadrat once narrated in my presence and in the presence of about fifteen of his associates. There is probably not one amongst them whose stomach did not pain due to excessive laughter.

The discussion was centred around customs. Someone asked him: “Hadrat, how did the present custom of *fātiḥah* start?” He replied: “Miyā, there was a *mullā* [Maulānā] who used to live in a Musjid and he used to receive *rotīs* from the people of the entire area. He started convincing them that he reads over the food and conveys the reward to the deceased. The ignorant people of this place assumed that there had to be some special way of conveying rewards to the deceased which is not known to all and sundry. An old woman brought *rotīs* one day and noticed that the *mullājī* was not there. A poor traveller was seated nearby and he was singing something meaningless. She gave him the *rotīs* saying: ‘Here, *miyājī* take this. The reward for it will reach my daughter.’ The traveller started eating the *rotīs*. Then the *mullājī* arrived. He saw this person eating the food that was supposed to have come to him and went into a rage. He did not say anything. He proceeded straight to his room, came out with a stick and started beating the poor man. The poor man started running away, but the *mullājī* chased him, continued beating him, and uttered obscenities all the while. The people heard the noise, came running closer, and saw that the *mullājī* had gone berserk. They tried to get a grip on him, but he kept slipping away from them and continued uttering obscenities. Eventually he became tired and started wiping off his perspiration. When the people realized that he was coming to his senses, they asked him: ‘*Mullājī*, what happened?’ He replied: ‘What do you mean what happened? You ignoramuses almost got me killed today. Some foolish person gave the *fātiḥah rotīs* to a stranger – who neither knows the deceased of this place nor does he live here. If a person does not know the identity of the deceased, how is he going to convey the rewards to them? Consequently, all the souls got

together and started fighting against each other, each one claiming the reward for himself. The poor soul [the old woman's daughter] who was supposed to receive the reward was deprived of it. I came out with my stick and started beating and chasing this person in an effort to free the reward for the girl, and almost lost my life in the process. Allāh gave me victory over them [the different souls who were claiming the reward]! If this happens again, I will certainly die.' The people were terrified by this entire incident and they felt convinced that they would have to ensure that the *mullājī* remains amongst them forever because he was fully aware of the identity of all the deceased, and he alone would be able to convey the rewards to the rightful recipients. It would be wasteful to give the *rotīs* to a stranger because, if he did not know the identities of the deceased, how would he be able to convey the reward to them?"

Although several consecutive tragedies had left Hadrat broken-hearted and human constraints had left him grief-stricken, he was extremely lively and would occasionally converse light-heartedly with his associates – so much so that some strangers would find it beneath his lofty status. He was generally quite informal and easy-going when he was amongst his associates, and particularly easy-going with some of his special associates. Upon seeing his openness, their own informality would increase, but they would confine themselves to the limits of *masnūn* (recommended and Sunnah) joking and thereby earn the rewards for it.

Once Hadrat was lying down on his bed after the '*ishā salāh*' and Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib got up to massage his legs. Hadrat said to him: "Miyā, why are you putting me to shame. When you do this, I feel very much ashamed." Maulwī Yahyā Sāhib replied: "Hadrat, Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib had a *khādim*. When he passed away, someone had a dream in which he saw that his entire body was in flames, but both his palms were safe and sound. The person asked him: 'Bhāi, how are you?' He replied: 'What can I say? I am being punished for my sins. My entire body

is in pain. However, these hands had touched Hadrat Maulānā's feet. Allāh ﷻ therefore said: "I feel ashamed to burn these hands." Upon hearing Maulwī Yahyā's story, Hadrat responded spontaneously by saying: "How excellent! This means you must lie down and I will massage your body. Very well, Miyā, let me do this."

Once Hadrat was sitting on his bed and a stool was lying behind him. Two *khādims* who were busy fanning Hadrat, started fighting for the stool. Each one wanted to sit on it while fanning Hadrat. Hadrat listened to the argument for a short while and said: "There were two *pīr zāde* (progeny of a Shaykh) who used to sit at the *khānqāh* entrance. Whatever they received [from people as offerings] would be shared equally between them. They also used to get involved in disputes over certain items. One would say that he wanted it, and the other would say that he wanted it. One day, they saw a man slowly approaching them. He had a bowl in his hand. They thought there was yoghurt in the bowl and started arguing over it. Eventually it erupted into a fist-fight. When the man came close to them, one of them looked into the bowl and realized that it was empty. He was very disappointed and immediately separated from his brother and said: 'Very well my brother – you can have it.' Saying this, Hadrat lowered his legs from the bed and said: "I am going home, you two can continue fighting."

Hadrat returned from the toilet one day and found Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib in the room. He was busy writing something. Hadrat said: "Let me ask you something – you are considered to be very intelligent. What is the grammatical composition (parsing) of this sentence: "*Allāh kar ke tū mar jā.*" Maulwī Yahyā replied: "Hadrat, must I really tell you?" Hadrat said: "Indeed Bhāi! That is why I asked you." Maulwī Yahyā said: "It contains an *illifāt* (digression) because, firstly, this is a *du'ā*' which means: 'O Allāh! Do this.' The speaker then turns to the

addressee and says: 'May you die.'" Hadrat smiled and remained silent.

It was indeed Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib's good fortune. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was very informal with him and loved him very dearly. From among Hadrat's associates, there was no equal to him in this regard. Consequently, many incidents were related to him which could be presented as examples of Hadrat's lawful and recommended joking.

On one occasion, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib, Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib, and Hāfiz Qamar ad-Dīn Sāhib sat down in the *seh darī* to have a meal. When Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib entered, one of them said: "Miyā Maulwī Yahyā Sāhib, today we want to eat with Hadrat?" He replied: "Very well, what is so difficult about that?" Saying this, he proceeded into the room, took a pen, and started writing forcefully. Hadrat sensed that someone was writing and asked: "Who is it? Is it Maulwī Yahyā?" He replied: "Yes, Hadrat." Hadrat asked: "Why did you not eat?" He replied: "Hadrat, I can only eat if someone offers me something to eat. They told me that I can only eat if Hadrat eats. If not, I must get up and go." Upon hearing these words, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī smiled, got up and said ... "*When a person is enmeshed in love, then love itself is a sorrow and calamity [and an unbearable difficulty].*" Saying this, he went outside and joined the others in their meal.

Hadrat once taught a *ta'wīdh* to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib and said: "Once there was a *pīr zāde* who said to someone: 'Remain in my company and whatever we receive, we will share between us. They proceeded and found a chickpea lying on the ground. He said: 'Miyā, pick it up, peel it, give half to me and take the other half for yourself.'" After relating this, Hadrat said: "Listen – if you remain in the company of those whom you love, this is the type of enjoyment you will experience."

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib once visited Hadrat. When they shook hands, Hadrat – as per his noble habit – asked: “Who is this?” He replied: “Wilāyat.” Hadrat said: “Why don’t you just say *walī*?”⁷

Truthfulness was always predominant in his jokes. It was an exact replica of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ manner of joking. Once his grandson, Sa’īd Aḥmad, was eating jāmun (also known as rose apple or Java plum). Hadrat said to him: “Bhāi, you must remove the jāmun seed from your mouth.” He responded as a child would usually respond and asked: “Why? I will eat the seed as well.” Hadrat said: “A tree will sprout from the seed.” This scared Sa’īd Aḥmad and he immediately spat the seed out.

Hadrat possessed a rare refinement – seldom found in others. While teaching Hadīth, mention was made of the inhabitants of Paradise. The men were described as people who would be wearing green garments and they would have no beards. A student asked: “Hadrat, a man’s beauty lies in keeping a beard. Why is this appearance [having no beard] prescribed for the men of Paradise?” Hadrat smiled and responded spontaneously: “The enjoyment in not keeping a beard must be asked from those who do not keep a beard.”

Once, Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib was disputing with Hadrat regarding a particular issue. He continued raising objection after objection and voicing doubt upon doubt. When the discussion prolonged, Hadrat said: “Who named you Sahūl (which means easy)? There is no *sahūlat* (ease) whatsoever in you. Your name ought to be Salūl because you pose too many questions [*salūl* means a naked (unsheathed) sword or dagger].”

⁷ *Wilāyat* is a verbal noun meaning “close friendship and affinity with Allāh ﷻ” and *walī* is a noun meaning “a close friend of Allāh ﷻ.”

Hadrat's jovial nature was most often displayed when he intended joining hearts and removing the concerns and troubles of his associates. On one occasion, Hadrat fell extremely ill and Maulwī Hakīm Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib was treating him. During the course of his treatment, Hadrat's illness simply increased. Hadrat's son, Hadrat Maulwī Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib, discontinued his treatment with Hakīm Ismā'īl Sāhib and undertook to treat his father himself. This disturbed Hakīm Ismā'īl Sāhib and he stopped presenting himself before Hadrat. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī called for him and, with utmost affection he said to him: "Bhāi Muḥammad Ismā'īl, are you angry?" Saying this, Hadrat quoted this couplet:

*The lover was angered
and separated [himself] from us,
while the beloved lamented:
"No one even comes to console me!"*

Hakīm Muḥammad Ismā'īl's anger and ill-feelings dissipated immediately. He started laughing and said: "Hadrat, I am your *khādim* and it is my express desire to provide you with comfort in whichever way possible."

Hadrat had no interest whatsoever in composing poetry or in writing it. He was given a large share of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ character in line with the verse:

*"We did not teach him poetry, nor is it suitable for him."
(Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69)*

Thus, one would rarely find any poetry in his speech and in his writing. If it is found in any place, it was merely a spontaneous and informal composition – as was the case with Rasūlullāh ﷺ uttering rhymed phrases without first pondering over them. If we were to collect all the lines of poetry from Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's life, it would not number more than twenty-five lines.

At the same time, whenever he uttered or wrote a poem, it would always be most suitable and fitting to the time and occasion – even though it was uttered without real reflection and thought. It was as though the poet – or Hadrat himself – had composed it specifically for that particular occasion.

A few years before his demise, Hadrat fell extremely ill. Various types of treatments were tried, but there seemed to be no improvement in his condition. Some of the *khādims* suspected that Hadrat may have fallen victim to black magic and sorcery. Subsequently, their suspicions proved to be true. Hadrat's devoted *khādims* – Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib and others – sent a person from Deoband, who was an expert at treating victims of black magic, sorcery, and so forth. When he reached Gangoh, Hadrat learnt – through Divine Inspiration – that this person was actually a disciple and student of a person who practises black magic. For that reason he sent him back. Later, when Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib came to visit Hadrat, he recited this line of poetry while shaking hands with him: "O Mīr! How heartless can you be? I fell ill and you are obtaining medication from the perfumer's son!"

Whenever Hadrat used to enter his private room after *zuhr salāh*, the doors would be shut. There were times when he was overcome with the desire to remain in solitude for a long time and he did not like to be disturbed by anyone during such a time. Allāh ﷻ had blessed Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib with the ability to recognize such occasions. It was for this reason that Hadrat had intense love for him and kept him in his service. On numerous occasions, Hadrat made the following statement: "Maulwī Yahyā is my eyes." May Allāh ﷻ bless Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib. The lofty position, which we refer to as 'pride in another person', was enjoyed by none other than him.

On one occasion, his [Maulwī Yahyā's] family members repeatedly

summoned him home. He went to Hadrat and said: "If you permit me, I will go home for one day and then I will return." Hadrat deferred this request several times. He knew that Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib's request for permission was merely a superficial one. He did not really want to leave Hadrat's service for a single moment, nor did Hadrat want him to go away for a single moment. On numerous occasions Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib would go to Lāl Musjid, or somewhere else. At such times Hadrat would become restless and call for him repeatedly. When he eventually returned, Hadrat would ask him: "Miyā, where did you go?" Once, he left for some work related matters and was quite delayed. In the meantime, Hadrat had called for him several times, saying: "Only Allāh knows where he has been delayed." When he finally returned, Hadrat said this couplet: "Do not come! O you who breaks his promise and is also repentant. Just as I passed my day [without you], the night will also pass [without you]."

When several demands from his mother were received, saying: "My heart is yearning to see Yahyā", Maulwī Yahyā Sāhib was forced to take leave and go home. Hadrat himself said to him: "Bhāi, go and come back." While shaking hands with Hadrat at the time of his departure, he said: "Hadrat, make *du'ā'* that I am able to return quickly." Hadrat responded: "Is it (making *du'ā'*) going to be by your saying so? [I will most definitely be making *du'ā'* for your speedy return. There is no need for you to even ask.] Miyā, you are going to carry my *janāzah*!"

Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib had really perfected the ability to gauge Hadrat's moods, and this was certainly by virtue of his services to Hadrat. When Hadrat wanted to be in solitude for longer than usual, its effect would settle on Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā's heart. He would not open the door, nor would he permit anyone else to open it.

This happened on one specific occasion. After a long while Maulwī

Yahyā Sāhib entered the room. He saw Hadrat seated, reading a *tasbīh*. Hadrat asked: "Where were you for so long?" He replied: "Hadrat, my heart did not want to open the room door any sooner." Hadrat asked: "Then why did you come in now?" He replied: "My heart suddenly felt the urge to open the door and come in." Hadrat smiled and recited this couplet:

*If he did not come,
then you should at least come.
How will your coming harm you?*

One specific day, Hadrat went to his house and someone had sent leavened bread and *qaurmah* (a highly spiced and tasty curry without turmeric and with very little gravy). Hadrat partook of this meal and proceeded to the *khānqāh* with a smiling face and a happy heart. He entered his room, sat down, and said to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib: "Miyā, do you have any likes?" He replied: "Hadrat, I do not like oil dhal. Apart from that, I like everything else." Hadrat responded spontaneously with this poem:

*O Jūr'at! What can I say when nothing seems to please me?
There is something which I have (the love of Allāh),
due to which nothing else pleases me.*

On another occasion he remarked: "Bhāi, I really like one of Hadrat's poems which has reference to crying from the heart:

*The entire creation has made me the target of their amusement
and you, (my beloved), did not even come to see me!*

In the year 1317 A.H. – after Ramadān, a new *miswāk* was brought to Hadrat. Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Rahmān Sāhib Bangālī asked Hadrat for his old *miswāk*. Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn said: "I had already thought of asking Hadrat if I could have it." Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Rahmān said: "You live nearby, you can always get another one

later on. Let me take this one." Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib said: "Very well, I will cut off the top section and you can take the remaining section." Hadrat was listening to this conversation and said: "A person had divided his house like this. [He then quoted a couplet]:

*The house – from the courtyard to the upper floor – is mine.
You can have the roof to the stars.*

Hadrat's method of seeking medical treatment and taking medication during his illness was the same as his other worldly affairs – it was based solely on his reliance (*tawakkul*) upon Allāh ﷻ. If someone suggested a medicine, prepared it, and presented it to him, he would drink it without any hesitation and he would consider it to be a Sunnah act. If not, he would not pay any particular attention to it of his own accord. If an ant came onto his leg, or any other part of his body [and bit him], he would moisten a paper and place it on top of it [the bite-mark] in order to save himself from flies settling on him. The paper would fall off after some time, but he would not perceive it unless his hand passed over the area. Once he perceived it, he would reapply the paper. If not, he would leave it as is.

After Hadrat lost his eyesight, his associates tried to seek medical treatment for it, but he did not agree to it. He would say: "Man must look at his other faculties and see what benefit is there in operating on his eyes. Look at Qārī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Marhūm – he had his eyes operated on, and six months later he passed away." Sometimes he would say: "There is a lot of pain in having an eye operation. It becomes difficult for one to perform ṣalāh. Who can bear such a difficulty?" At other times he would say: "Bhāi, I am not going to seek medical treatment for it. I have heard the doctors prohibit such a patient from moving for a few days and I cannot allow myself to miss ṣalāh."

Doctor Subhān 'Alī Khān was a famous and skilled civil surgeon and a qualified doctor in this field. He personally came to see Hadrat and assured him that he would not miss a single salāh. He would merely have to abstain from all movement for a few hours and this would be possible between the *fajr* and *zuhr* times. He assured him that he may gladly perform *rukū'* and *sajdah*. Upon hearing this, Hadrat deferred the matter by saying: "I cannot bear such discomfort and none of my work is affected by the loss of my eyesight. For what reason should I bear this unnecessary discomfort?" In short, Hadrat did not agree to the operation.

When Maulwī 'Ubaydullāh Sāhib asked him to please consider having the operation, he replied: "There is a Hadīth Qudsī which states that, if Allāh ﷻ takes away a person's eyesight and he exercises patience over this loss, Allāh ﷻ shall recompense him with Paradise. This is probably the only means through which I can attain Paradise. I would therefore prefer to remain blind." He also said this to some of his special associates: "Miyā, previously I had to close my eyes [to sleep, or for whatever reason]. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, they are now automatically closed. Why should I then have a desire to have them opened?"

Hadrat did not have any specific word which was his *takiyah kalām* (a verbal tick – an needless word, sound or phrase habitually introduced into speech) and which he used unintentionally and unnecessarily. He was not in the habit of taking oaths and probably only uttered the words *wallāhi* (by Allāh) or *khudā kī qasam* (I take an oath in Allāh's Name) once or twice during his entire lifetime. He rarely made ambiguous statements and only used such statements where there was a need for them. His replies were generally clear, open and explicit. Whenever he used ambiguous words, they would be most exquisite and would be considered perfect – even if they were used formally. What, then, can possibly be said about the perfection of these words and statements whenever he used them in the right context and in the right place –

when they would be uttered spontaneously, without formality? Only a person with sound taste would be able to appreciate their exquisiteness.

Once Maulwī Badr ad-Dīn Sāhib said to him: "Ḥadrat, I have completed acquiring knowledge. I would like to spend a few days in your company and engage in *dhikr*." He replied: "Miyā, if you have completed studying, then teach so that you can remember [what you have studied]. Only those who wish to pour water over their knowledge should come here."

On another occasion a person presented himself to Ḥadrat and a thought crossed his mind: "I cannot wield my influence here. What can I gain from this ascetic lifestyle?" Although he entertained such thoughts, he still made the request to pledge *bay'ah*. Ḥadrat refused, saying: "Not now. We will decide about it at a later stage." A short while later he made the same request and, in a pleading tone, he said: "Ḥadrat, I came here with the express intention of becoming your *murīd*." Coincidentally, a person had sent a few rupees to Ḥadrat as contribution towards the construction of the Musjid. These coins were still in Ḥadrat's pocket. When this person persisted in his request for *bay'ah*, Ḥadrat pushed his hand into his pocket, moved the coins around – which caused them to make a tinkling sound – and said: "Miyā, why are you wasting your time here, I am only desirous of money." Ḥadrat then quoted the following couplet:

*The hands of a wealthy person [who deals with money]
become black [with the ink and the dirt].*

*What, then, is the condition
of the heart which is engrossed in it?*

As mentioned previously, he was very strict on himself with regard to his application of *masā'il* in his personal life and would always follow the view of caution which was unanimously accepted. When

it came to people who asked him questions, he would try as far as possible to provide the easiest route for them. However, he was very strict on the issue of *bid'ah* and other sins, and thus he would issue *fatāwā* of impermissibility even where it concerned the preludes to such evils. He did this on the principle of *saddan lilbāb* – shutting the door to further evils.

A person once asked him: “Hadrat, surely there is no harm in relating the true story of the martyrdom [of Husayn ؑ] on the 10th of Muharram?” He replied: “It is not permissible. It is a prelude to Shī'ism. Even if you saved yourself from relating false narrations, you will certainly be emulating the Shī'ah. The one who emulates a people is included amongst them – من تشبه يقوم فهو منهم.”

Allāh ﷻ had sent him as a person who would provide ease to people, and for that reason he would not impose unnecessary restrictions on them. Wherever he could find ease in the Sharī'ah, he would express it. He was most considerate of '*umūm-e-balwā* (general suffering, or something which the masses are dependent upon). When the issue of smoking a *huqqah* was raised, he said: “It is *makrūh* to smoke a *huqqah* because it causes a stench to emanate from the mouth. This is, however, not confined to a *huqqah*. There are other things which also cause a stench e.g. eating onions, garlic, radishes etc. It is *makrūh* to eat these foods in their raw state.” [Upon hearing that,] Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'il Sāhib said: “Hadrat, the *maulwī's* have gone to extremes on the issue of the *huqqah*. Some of them consider it to be as *ḥarām* as alcohol.” Hadrat said: “They are all wrong. Tobacco is *mubāḥ* (lawful) – like all other foods.” One of the *khādims* remarked: “Hadrat, many of those who inhale the *huqqah* smoke during Ramādān fall unconscious. This shows that the tobacco is intoxicating.” He replied: “If black pepper is inhaled on an empty stomach, it also causes a person to fall unconscious. Miyā, the tobacco does not intoxicate. Rather, its pungency – when inhaled on an empty stomach – causes unconsciousness.”

When coloured dyes came into vogue and Hadrat established that alcohol is added to it, he issued a *fatwā* stating: "Do not dye the clothes with such dyes. If you really have to dye them, you may do so, but wash them thoroughly after dying them." One of his *khāclims* said: "Hadrat, the parts of the dye which remain on the clothes even after washing them thoroughly, will also be impure." He replied: "No, after washing it thoroughly it would become purified." The questioner was a special student of Hadrat and quite informal with him, so he said: "Hadrat, I consider it to be impure." Hadrat remained silent. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib, who was also present at the time, provided a reproving answer. He said: "The jurists state that when dung and other impurities are found on a garment and it is washed thoroughly, the garment will be pure, even if a stain still remains on the garment." Hadrat said: "You are right."

Hadrat was extremely informal with his close associates, and one would not easily find someone like him in this regard. Whenever he was in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [*Nānautwī rahimahullāh*] or Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib, the joviality and cultured joking which took place was worth observing. People are still searching for such scenes today, but they are nowhere to be found! They would entertain those who were in attendance with nifty and embellished anecdotes while, at the same time, teaching them the important lesson of light-heartedness and sincere friendship.

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān, a resident of Ābhah, had very high regard for Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib and was desirous of pledging *bay'ah* at his hands. As was his noble habit, Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm continued deferring him and diverting his mind to other matters. One day, he detailed his wish on paper and presented it to Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib. The Maulānā read the letter and placed it in his pocket without giving any reply. Maulwī Nazar assumed that Hadrat Maulānā was

paying no attention to him whatsoever. Coincidentally, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī arrived in Nānautā a few days later. When Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān Sāhib learnt of Imām Rabbānī's arrival, he also went there. He made the same request, wrote the same words which he had written in his previous letter, and presented it to Imām Rabbānī – adding these few words: "I had made this request in writing and had given it to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib, but Maulānā did not reply." Hadrat had just sat down to perform *wudū'* when the letter was presented to Imām Rabbānī. Hadrat took the letter, read it, and had just placed it in his pocket when Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāhib arrived with a water jug filled with water. He sat down next to Hadrat. Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Sāhib was standing in front of them. Hadrat looked at Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm, smiled and addressed Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān Sāhib, saying: "Why did you give a letter to such a dumb *pīr* (Shaykh) who did not even reply to your letter?" Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim also laughed and said: "See! He has now come to a *pīr* who can speak. Now you reply to his letter."

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān relates: "On one occasion Hadrat came to Rāmpūr and – as was his habit – he stayed over at Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib's place. When I heard about Hadrat's arrival, I also presented myself there. That morning, the Hakīm Sāhib sat down on a bed and opened the box in which he kept his medicines, perfumes, ink pot etc. Hadrat smiled at him and said: "Hakīm jī, I see you are stretching out your hands a lot to the world!" Hakīm Sāhib replied: "No, Hadrat." Just then a person entered and presented his urine sample to Hakīm Sāhib. Hadrat was sitting at a distance. He looked at the urine sample from where he was seated and remained silent. When the patient went to discard the urine sample, Hadrat said: "Hakīm jī, you must be careful with the treatment which you give to this patient." Hakīm Sāhib was perplexed and asked: "Why, Hadrat?" He replied: "He is a lost case." When the patient returned, Hakīm Sāhib asked him to describe his illness. He described that he was getting hiccups, and

other related complaints which were life-threatening. The Hakīm Sāhib was really concerned and did not delay his treatment.

Upon hearing about Hadrat's light-heartedness and jovial mood during his stay in Rāmpūr, the students surrounded Hadrat, started massaging his legs and seeing to his other needs. One of the students asked: "Hadrat, what are the special qualities of *urad dhal*?" Hadrat began describing its qualities and effects, and continued explaining for a long time. All the students, as well as the Hakīm Sāhib, listened attentively and were enraptured by his explanation. When he completed his explanation, one student asked: "Very well Hadrat, what are the effects of carrots?" He replied: "You can refer to it as a *saydānī* (the wife of a *sayyid*), a *shaykhānī* (the wife of a Shaykh), or a *mughlānī* (a Moghul woman)." They all laughed at this. Then someone asked him about beetroot, and he replied: "It provides strength and it purifies the blood." Another student asked him about radishes, and he said: "It is a *chamārī* (a cobbler's wife)."

Whenever Hadrat Imām Rabbānī spoke, drops of saliva would form in the corners of his mouth. Whenever he remained silent, a regal air would encompass him. He was an extremely sociable person and – no matter how dirty or tattered a person's clothes would be – he would never recoil from seating the person near him, shaking hands with him, or speaking to him in an affectionate manner. Similarly, no matter how spiritually ruined a person would be, he would never consider it to be an obstacle.

Seeing to the needs of others was one of his peculiar traits, and concealing their faults was his hallmark. He was a person of great courage and did his utmost to boost the confidence of his attendants. He would constantly say: "Do whatever Allāh ﷻ inspires you to do. Do not lose courage. Even if you do not feel any effect on your heart, do you think that making *dhikr* with the tongue is a trivial matter? If the tongue is saved from the Hell-fire because

it engaged in Allāh's remembrance, the heart will also be saved." He would never permit hopelessness and despondency to creep into his associates. At the same time, he would not tolerate it if they stagnated at one point, or regressed. He would use every means at his disposal – whether it was speaking or writing to them – to encourage them to turn to Allāh ﷻ. He used to say: "Do as much as you can and be grateful to Allāh ﷻ, because this is how you will progress:

وَلَيْنَ شُكْرُكُمْ لَا يَزِيدُكُمْ وَلَإِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

*"If you are grateful, I will give you more.
If you are ungrateful, My Punishment is severe."*

Hadrat was unsurpassed when it came to encouraging and motivating others towards the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ. Whether the person was an 'ālim or ignorant, a person of status or a commoner, a nobleman or a peasant, wealthy or a pauper – anyone who presented himself before Hadrat would certainly depart with a share of eternal success and a desire for the Hereafter.

At present, there are thousands of people who will acknowledge that merely looking at him would cause them to think of Allāh ﷻ, and that sitting in his company would create an aversion for this world in their hearts. It was not only his tongue which directed them towards following the Sharī'ah and adhering to the Sunnah. All his actions – from dusk to dawn and dawn to dusk – taught them these lessons. It constantly taught every Muslim that Allāh's Name is the best companion in this world, and that the actual objective and the definitive means of acquiring Allāh's ﷻ Pleasure is to follow Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Allāh ﷻ had endowed Hadrat with firm determination and a strong sense of purpose in whatever occupation He had placed him, and thus he never wavered in his duties. The sun rises in the morning

and sets in the evening. The moon appears as a crescent at times, while at other times it becomes a full moon. At times it is visible, while at other times it remains concealed from our eyes. Sometimes the day shines bright, while at other times it becomes dark like the night. Sometimes we experience cold weather, and at other times sweltering heat. In short, this world changes constantly and the universe is always in flux. However, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was one unique person who remained constantly engrossed in the worship of One Allāh ﷻ. He was matchless in his ability to remain unaffected by the changing world, while engrossed in the occupation to which he was attached – the worship of Allāh ﷻ.

He certainly underwent changes with the passing of time, but his emulation of the Sunnah remained constant under all conditions. It was his heart-felt desire that there should not be a single soul who disobeys Allāh ﷻ and opposes Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His affection did not desire good for himself alone. He desired the well-being of the entire world and did not want a single person to enter Hell-fire. He was extremely soft-hearted, and would become restless upon hearing of anyone's pain, hardship, poverty and adversity. Whether the person was known or unknown to him, a relative or a stranger – he could not bear his poverty and destitution.

He would become even more disturbed and restless if a person suffered from spiritual poverty and bankruptcy. He would become extremely aggrieved whenever he heard about a person's sinfulness and irreligiousness. His heart would cry out for such a person and he would make *du'ā* for him in a manner which would surpass the way in which he cried out and made *du'ā* over his own poverty. He never cursed the worst of his enemies. If his enemy was afflicted by a natural calamity from Allāh ﷻ, he would never rejoice upon hearing about it. He probably never suffered more abuse and humiliation than that which he had to endure from Maulwī Aḥmad Radā Sāhib Barelwī. But, by Allāh, we never heard Hadrat Imām Rabbānī utter a single word which would indicate that Hadrat

considered him to be his enemy. When Maulwī Ahmad Radā Sāhib suffered from leprosy and his blood putrefied, some people rejoiced and said that he was suffering the consequences of his abuse in this very world. However, when someone related to Hadrat saying: "The Barelwī Maulwī has become a leper", Hadrat rose in agitation and said: "Miyā, we should never become happy over another's misery. We do not know what is recorded in our destiny."

One day Hadrat was listening to the letters which he had received. The first letter which was read to him was a post-card from Bombay. The letter informed him that Maulwī Hidāyat Rasūl had been sentenced to imprisonment for marrying a woman who was already married to another man. Upon hearing this news, some of those who were present rejoiced because he [Maulwī Hidāyat Rasūl] was Hadrat's ardent enemy. However, when Hadrat heard the news, he responded saying:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

At the most, whenever Hadrat felt greatly offended by an abusive *mubtadi'* (*bid'atī*), he would stop making *du'ā'* for that person. However, this would only happen when the person's abuse had gone beyond Hadrat and had also afflicted his associates. A person once wrote a letter to him in which he explained his misery and requested Hadrat's *du'ā'*. Hadrat responded: "This is the same person who bears enmity towards Maulwī Khalīl Ahmad! He bears enmity towards my friends and requests me for *du'ā'*? I cannot do that. At the same time, I will not curse anyone."

While Hadrat's eyesight was still intact and he still had his teeth, his food used to come from his house. He would sit with his guests and have his meal with them. After he lost his eyesight, he started having his meals at home and food would be sent outside for his guests. However, he was most concerned about his guests and would first ensure that they had received their food before he would

have his own meal. He would even go outside to enquire whether everyone had had their meal and made sure that no one had been left out. Simplicity was second nature to him. Thus, clay utensils and copper utensils were the same to him. Whatever was cooked in the house would be brought outside and presented to the guests, and two to three people would eat from one utensil.

These are but a few examples of his habits, practices, traits and qualities – all of which portrayed his full emulation of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – a gift which Allāh ﷻ had bestowed upon Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. It is not our objective to relate every single incident in this regard nor would it be possible to do so. We merely presented a few examples. *Inshā Allāh*, we hope that the above will suffice. I now conclude this chapter and I make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ that He will enable worthless and spineless people like us to uphold the honour of our allegiance to Hadrat, and that He will enable us to hold firmly to the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as much as we can, because our success and salvation in the Hereafter is confined to this and nothing else.

والله الموفق والمستعان، إليه الإجابة وعليه التكلان

Allāh ﷻ Alone gives inspiration [to do good]. We seek His Help alone, we turn to Him Alone, and we place our reliance upon Him Alone.

ACCEPTANCE OF BAY'AH

*O traveller, if you are the possessor of a heart
[and you are a lover of Allāh]
then hold on to the hem of a Shaykh, and return!*

*O Farīd (unique one), remain true to your love
so that you may receive the key
to the treasures of ma'rifat [recognition of Allāh].*

*A person who travels
without a guide on the path of love ...
His entire life will pass,
and still he will be oblivious to the meaning of 'love'.*

An article titled *Yād Yārān* (in remembrance of our beloved) was written by the physician of the *ummah*, Hadrat al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Qārī Shāh Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī and sent to me for inclusion in this biography. The article contains thirty recollections which I have included under different headings in this book, according to the related subject matter. To begin this chapter, and as a source of blessing, I will now quote his recollections regarding the subject of *bay'ah*:

[Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes]: "It was during my student days in Deoband that I was presented with the first opportunity to meet this centre of instruction [Hadrat Imām Rabbānī]. Hadrat used to come to Deoband regularly, and thus honoured the people of the *madrasah* and the residents of the town with his visits. The moment I saw him, I was filled with affinity and love for him, and for that reason, I requested *bay'ah* – although I did not really understand the essence and purpose of *bay'ah* at the time. It is not necessary for an expert physician to accede to a patient's requests. In fact, it could prove detrimental to the patient's health. Hadrat therefore said to me: "As long as you have not completed your studies, any thoughts of *bay'ah* are whisperings of Shayṭān." At the time I did not understand the true meaning, magnitude and wisdom behind what he had said. In fact, I misconstrued it as a temporary deferment. However, I now realize that Hadrat's reply was evidence of his lofty level of instruction and training."

His reply could be explained thus: Shayṭān's primary goal is to cause harm to man, and harm is not restricted to committing sin – although sin would be the highest form of harm. Another type of

harm is depriving a person of obedience and its reward, even if it is through getting him involved in another act of obedience which is of a lower level. The first type of harm [committing sin] can be perceived – not only by most of the righteous (*sulahā*), but also by the masses. However, the ability to perceive the second type of harm is confined only to the *muhaqqiqīn* (erudite scholars and pious personalities) – in fact, [its perception is confined] to the *siddīqīn*. This is why the Hadīth states:

فَقِيَّةٌ وَاجِدٌ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ أَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

“A single faqīh is more severe against Shayṭān than a thousand [ignorant] worshippers.”

A *faqīh* is a person who has the ability to understand realities, and subtle and minute causes.

After studying it deeply, I realised that Shayṭān follows a course of deception. This is really a very complex issue. Where there is no hope of influencing a person into sinning, he considers a decrease in reward to be a boon. This is, in itself, a very deep-seated enmity. A vigilant *faqīh* – through his Allāh-endowed insight – is able to recognize this Shayṭānic plot, to expose it, and to put an end to all his plans. This weighs very heavily upon Shayṭān.

The acquisition of Islamic knowledge is a tool which guides a person and prevents him from falling into many slippery places [committing sins]. Furthermore, the benefit of knowledge is not confined to the person alone, but it becomes a benefit unto others as well. Thus, it is undoubtedly superior to excessive *nawāfil* (optional acts of worship) and other practices. Furthermore, from experience I can say with certainty that, after a person pledges *bay'ah*, he becomes increasingly inclined towards these things [optional acts of worship]. There is a principle of logic which states:

النَّفْسُ لَا تَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَى الشَّيْئَيْنِ فِي آنٍ وَاحِدٍ

"The nafs cannot pay attention to two things at the same time."

All of this will collectively result in a person becoming disinclined towards gaining Islamic knowledge. No person can successfully fulfil and complete a task if he has no inclination towards it. In such a case, his knowledge will certainly remain defective. Since he will be ignorant of certain essential matters, it will cause harm to his beliefs (*i'tiqād*), or to his practices and actions. This is the first type of harm [initiated by Shaytān]. The least harm this will cause is that the person will be deprived of the abovementioned condition. This is the second type of harm [initiated by Shaytān]. A few examples in this regard have been excellently described by Hadrat Quṭb al-Waqt Ibn 'Atā' Iskandarī *rahimahullāh* in his book, *Tanwīr*. Hadrat 'Ārif Mas'ūd Bek *rahimahullāh* conveyed the same message in the following couplet:

O, you Hājīs who have left for Hajj ...
Where, O where have you reached?
The Beloved is to be found [right] here ...
[He is] to be found right here!

In this couplet he is not addressing everyone – only those upon whom hajj is not compulsory. These people are casting aside the more important matter of self-purification (*islāh-e-nafs*) and going for hajj. This was the essence of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's reply to me: فَلِلَّهِ ذَرُّهُ وَلِلَّهِ بَرُّهُ [Hadrat Thānwī's article ends here].

There have been numerous incidents in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's life where we have seen him refusing requests for *bay'ah*. Furthermore, there were different levels of his refusal, and it is therefore not possible for every person to fathom the underlying reasons for such a refusal. The tone he used, the way in which he spoke, and his method of refusal varied in each instance and could only be

understood by a person who was in possession of sound perception. How would an ordinary person ever understand the underlying reason for his refusal to accept *bay'ah*?

Some wayward-thinking people consider the refusal to accept *bay'ah* to be heavy-handed and weighty. The physician of the *ummah*, Maulānā Thānwī, has gone into great detail in order to remove such doubts and misgivings. I consider it appropriate to quote it here in order to clarify matters:

Tasawwuf essentially refers to the treatment of spiritual maladies. A doctor has to resort to his expertise and intelligence when treating physical maladies. When treating spiritual maladies, a *Shaykh-e-Tarīqah* has to resort to insight and perception to a far greater extent. The physical body is apparent, its illnesses are apparent, and its treatment is apparent. On the other hand, the soul is hidden inside, its illnesses are concealed, and the identification and diagnosis of such illnesses has to be done with internal eyes known as *baṣīrah* (insight). Such *baṣīrah* can be found in the heart of a sensible and wise *walī*.

We can ask any doctor who has a medical consulting room regarding the difficulties in treating physical ailments. He treats every type of patient – those who have simple ailments, as well as those who have complicated illnesses. Only such a doctor will be able to tell us which patient's condition can be treated, and which medicines would benefit each type of patient. In like manner, when it comes to the difficulties in treating spiritual illnesses, we will have to ask the wise man who has been appointed to protect and supervise the *īmān* of people, who has been appointed as a guide and instructor, and has been sent to a certain part of the world for this purpose.

There are many illnesses which cannot be treated. It would be a waste of valuable time for the doctor to write a prescription for such

an illness in an attempt to treat it. The only treatment for such a patient is to clearly refuse treating him, or to defer his treatment in a subtle way. People who are not acquainted with the field [of medicine] and who are short-sighted in this regard will obviously look down upon such a doctor and consider him to be hard-hearted and merciless. However, any person who has the slightest understanding of medicine will realize that this is also a way of treating a terminally ill person.

Similarly, many people have requested *bay'ah* at the hands of the wise sages of the *Ummah*. However, through their spiritual, internal expertise, these sages considered their illnesses to be untreatable and blankly refused to accept their *bay'ah*. Although some ignoramuses might say that he committed a sin by refusing to bring the misguided onto guidance, those who have the slightest understanding of this field – and possess insight into these matters – would recognize that the very refusal of the Shaykh was, in reality, the final treatment for such an unfortunate fellow.

You will see many healthy, robust people walking and moving about like normal, healthy people, but a skilled doctor would be able to tell you that the person is suffering from tuberculosis and that he is only a guest in this world for a few days. It would be difficult for him to survive and his continued existence would be virtually impossible. Similarly, there are many handsome, good-looking and educated people who are proud of their knowledge, merit and the sound condition of their soul. However, an insightful *faqīh* would immediately be able to perceive that the person is drowning in the ocean of pride and ostentation from which it would be difficult to escape, and that it would be impossible for him to acquire the eternal bliss of the Hereafter – unless he is saved.

*Do not discuss the secrets of love
with the lover who claims true love for Allāh ...*

*Leave him be, so that he may die
[and sacrifice himself] for this love.*

The further we move away from the blessed era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the more the blessings of Prophethood are decreasing, and the weaker the capabilities of the soul become. Every day is worse than the previous day, and the soul becomes weaker with every passing moment. Unfortunately, we do not perceive this. How can we perceive it when perception of one's own illness is in itself the fruit of being in possession of strong perception? When the heart is riddled with illness, it is difficult for it to perceive its own illness. The consequence of this 'absence of perception' is that each person considers himself to be righteous and not in need of any treatment. To start off with, the person does not even see the need to go to a physician in order to have his illness diagnosed. In other words, he does not see the need for *bay'ah*. Even if he is presented with the opportunity to spend some time in a 'medical consulting room' – upon seeing the crowd of people who are gathered there – he feels ashamed to have his pulse checked, because this would mean that he would be included in the register of patients. If he does manage to summon the courage to cross this barrier, he finds it impossible to bear a simple examination by the doctor.

If a person suffers from inflammation of his eyes and the doctor tells him: "I cannot treat you at present. You must come at some other time. I will treat you when I feel it appropriate to treat your eyes", then, the person who truly wants his eyes to be treated and considers them to be a priceless gift, would not hesitate to present himself before the doctor – even if he had to do it twenty times. As for the person who is bent on mocking the doctor ... he would pay no heed whatsoever.

Today, if a Shaykh had to tell a person who suffers from 'inflammation of the eyes': "I will not initiate you as a *murīd* at present. You must return at some other time", the person would

become like a spear [an antagonist], he would be displeased with the Shaykh's refusal, and would continue hurling abuses at him for the rest of his life – let alone going back to the Shaykh! This pride and haughtiness of his is proof of his unworthiness, and it exposes the fact that he is terminally ill. However, such a refusal can be of real benefit to the person who is conscious of his illness. As for the person who is the embodiment of pride and, consequently, does not even consider himself to be proud ... he will never acknowledge his own illness which has become manifest through this diagnosis.

*If the heart is completely covered in dust,
there is no space for any good to enter.
A proud person declares the Tauhīd of Allāh ...
[Understand well, this belief] does not lie in an utterance,
but to have conviction in it with the heart.*

Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī's spiritual favours were like valuable pearls, and he did not want these priceless pearls to fall into the wrong hands. His religious self-respect, honour, and high level of prophetic bestowal could not tolerate that the string of pearls should hang around the neck of an ugly, repulsive-looking person. He had no attachment whatsoever to the creation. The creation could not give him anything. This independence, which Allāh ﷻ had endowed him with, was a never-ending treasure for which thousands of worldly kingdoms could be sacrificed.

Imām Rabbānī's proficiency and astuteness as a spiritual physician was unanimously accepted and acknowledged by those who were affiliated with this field. In fact, they were left astounded whenever they learnt of the depth of his expertise. He possessed incisive inner perception and spiritual insight, and was able to identify the slightest defect of the heart. A defect which could not be perceived by many insightful spiritual doctors, would easily be identified by him. Once he had made the diagnosis, the defect would become apparent. He was a manifestation of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ instruction:

اتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ

“Fear the insight of a [true] believer, .
because he looks with Allāh-bestowed Light.”

The *mashā'ikh-e-Tarīqah* of the world, and the *auliyā'* of the time, acknowledged and accepted the insight which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī possessed. We can present and quote numerous incidents as examples which would clearly display his [spiritual] acumen. Numerous people presented themselves before him and requested him to accept their *bay'ah*, but he flatly refused them. However, there are also many examples where he would initially refuse, and after some time – once the defect which existed in the person had disappeared – he would initiate the person into the *silsilah*, hold him by his hand, and generously spend all the eternal bounties of the Hereafter on him. Had he been miserly in this regard, his *murīds* would not have numbered thousands today. At the same time, he was not wasteful and lavish. He understood very well that, when the temporary riches of this world are spent wrongly, man becomes ungrateful of the Allāh-bestowed Favours upon him, and thereby includes himself amongst the brothers of Shaytān. How, then, could any self-respecting person hand over the priceless jewel of Allāh's Pleasure to an unworthy recipient who would use it, and spend it in the wrong places, at the wrong times?

Hadrat never hesitated in permitting the hearts of the seekers to be enlightened by the brilliant light which he had received from the niche [breast] of prophethood.⁸ If he showed any hesitance in granting permission, he would not have had more than thirty *khulafā'* today. At the same time, he understood completely that a

⁸ The word “niche” refers to that hole in a wall where lamps used to be placed in the past. Here it is metaphorically used to denote the breast [or chest] of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as it was the repository of *īmān*, *tauhīd* and knowledge of the Sharī'ah and Divine Secrets. [Mirqaat]

careless and extravagant person would spend his wealth lavishly if he were to receive it gratis, because he did not know its true value. A person had to strive with sincerity and bear the difficulties, otherwise, how would Allāh ﷻ approve of handing over the Light of Guidance to someone who does not appreciate it?

Hadrat had completely opened the highway to guidance, but he could not permit an impure person to walk on this road only to spoil, tarnish, and damage it. He was an *amīn* (a person entrusted) of Allāh ﷻ. He was sent into this world to distribute the Eternal Bounties of Allāh ﷻ to people who possessed refined taste and a discerning appetite, and who would convey these rights to rightful people and fulfil the duty of trusteeship.

Like all other balanced qualities, generosity refers to the absence of miserliness (where the person refuses to spend, even if there is a need to spend), and the absence of extravagance (where there is no sign of lavishness or unnecessary, inappropriate and inopportune spending). Such a level of generosity is considered to be extremely important in the field of guidance and instruction. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī displayed the true meaning of generosity throughout his life. He possessed extremely incisive insight – seldom found in others. His juristic acumen was intense and vast, and it would be difficult to find anyone who equalled him in this regard.

He was the crown amongst his contemporaries, and the leader of the *ahl-e-haqq* (those who tread the true path). The following quality was his hallmark:

لَا يَخَافُونَ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةً لَّائِمَةً

"They do not fear the criticism of critics for the Sake of Allāh."

If his heart had the slightest taint of pride, not a single person would

have come to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands. The task of initiating someone as a *murīd*, holding his hand, and instructing him to repent was not such a difficult task that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī could not perform it. His work was unsurpassed by anyone in his era. He was unique in his courage and quest, and equally unique in his efforts to see results. From amongst all his unique and matchless qualities, this quality of 'not accepting *bay'ah* from all and sundry' was the fruit of his wisdom and insight, and of the responsible position of guidance and instruction which he held. More accurately, he initiated into the *silsilah* only those who had passed the test of *talab* (quest). If he found anyone defective in this measure, he would refuse him flatly or defer him until he found him to be sincere.

One aspect of the above-mentioned insight which Imām Rabbānī possessed is described by the physician of the *ummah*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib, as such: "He waited for the time when the medication would be most beneficial and did not initiate me into occupying myself in an intrinsic benefit (*dhikr*) at a time when I was busy with a transitive benefit (knowledge)."

In short, Hadrat would – first of all – test the seeker's *talab* (quest, thirst) to see whether it was sincere or not. If there was any deficiency in it at the time, his insight would perceive it immediately and he would withdraw his hand from *bay'ah*. After this test, he would wait for the appropriate time, observe the person, defer him, observe how he occupied his time, assess the company he kept, and examine how he conducted himself in his company. He would prescribe the course of instruction which was most suited to the person.

If a person wants to eat food, he must have a true desire for it. If such a person is not genuinely hungry, the most exotic and delicious dishes would not be of any benefit to him. In fact, it would be harmful to him. After it has been established that a sincere desire exists, the inclination, feasibility, time, season,

sweetness, saltiness and so forth has to be taken into consideration. In like manner, in order for all *adhkār* (plural of *dhikr*) and *ashghāl* (spiritual practices) to be of benefit, a sincere *ṭalab* is of fundamental importance. Once the *ṭalab* is perfect, the person can be initiated into any one of the four *silsilahs* that is appropriate to him – Chistīyyah, Naqshbandīyyah, Qādirīyyah or Suhrawardīyyah – and instructed into *dhikr*, *fikr*, *murāqabah*, *pās anfās* etc., depending on his abilities, the time at his disposal, his tranquillity and his livelihood.

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib relates: “After my final exams, upon completion of my studies at Madrasah ‘Āliyah Deoband – I think it was in 1312 A.H. – I went to Gangoh with a view to visiting Hadrat. I requested *bay’ah* in writing. Hadrat replied: “*Bay’ah* would neither be permissible nor beneficial at present.” After spending one day with him, I presented myself to him for permission to leave. He said: “These are all deceptions of Shaytān when he tries to divert a person from his studies and gets him occupied in *dhikr* and *wazā’if* (plural of *wazīfah*). You have studied the Hadīth which states that a single ‘ālim is weightier against Shaytān than a thousand [ignorant] worshippers. You may now leave. Go and teach the *darsī* books (the textbooks in the ‘ālim course).” I eventually departed without fulfilling my objective. Hadrat’s reason for refusing is obvious. I think there was another reason for his refusal. At the time when I requested *bay’ah* there was some doubt in my heart. I had a special connection with Maulwī Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. I was not sure whether I should pledge *bay’ah* here [in Gangoh] or whether I should go to Ganj Murādābād. Hadrat’s refusal to accept my *bay’ah* was actually his *karāmat*. When I eventually made up my mind to pledge *bay’ah* at his hands and had no doubt whatsoever, Hadrat acceded to my request and accepted my *bay’ah*.”

It was noticed that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would, in most cases,

accept the *bay'ah* of the ignorant villagers and the general public without hesitation. This was because they did not possess the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. They generally themselves to be useless and felt the need to hold on to a Shaykh. As for those who were cultured and perceptive ... especially students, '*ulamā*' and *pīr zāde* (descendants and family members of *mashā'ikh*) – he would defer them for a few days, gauge their determination and then accept their *bay'ah*. The reason for this was that these people were generally proud of their position or knowledge – either because they were the descendants of *auliyā*' or because of their knowledge. They were under the assumption that they (*maulwīs*) were the leaders and chiefs amongst the ignorant, and they considered themselves to be the deputies of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

On one occasion, a youngster – who appeared to be very capable – came to Gangoh and requested *bay'ah* to Hadrat. Hadrat categorically replied: "I will never accept your *bay'ah*." He went to Maulwī Yahyā Sāhib to intercede on his behalf, but his intercession was not accepted. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī received a letter which was filled with vulgar swear words and rude insults. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib was appointed to receive all Hadrat's letters and to read it out to him. He started reading this letter, but he stopped after one or two lines when he saw the vulgar language which it contained. Hadrat asked: "Do you know which *buzurg* sent this letter?" He replied: "Hadrat, I do not know." Hadrat lowered his tone and said: "It is from the very same person for whom you interceded the day before yesterday. He has shown his true colours upon reaching Sahāranpūr. [The letter had been posted from Sahāranpūr]."

A *maulwī* – whose name I do not consider appropriate to mention – once came to Hadrat. The *maulwī* noticed that Hadrat neither looked up to him nor did he accord him any honour. This grieved the man. When he requested *bay'ah*, he did it very half-heartedly. Hadrat refused saying: "Why are you wasting your time here? I will

not initiate you as my *murīd*." As long as this person remained in Gangoh, he neither spoke to anyone nor did he open himself up to anyone. After he eventually departed, he said the following about Hadrat to whomever he met: "Miyā, what a waste of time! He is like a drum which sounds good from a distance. He does not even know that I went to test him. When I saw his true colours, I left. Why should I waste my time becoming his *murīd*?" The fact of the matter is that, if he had been accorded the respect and honour which he expected, Hadrat would have been the apple of his eye. Showing affection and kindness to spiritually sick patients is the criterion of proficiency in a physician. If he does not possess this quality, he cannot be a physician.

Two people once came to the *khānqāh*, shook hands with Hadrat and sat down. Hadrat asked: "Who is it?" They replied: "Hadrat, we are your *murīds*." Hadrat said: "No, you are not my *murīds*." They said: "Hadrat, you probably forgot us." Hadrat gave the same reply. They said the same thing a third time, and again Hadrat gave the same reply: "No, you are definitely not my *murīds*." These two eventually left the room. They went to sit with Maulwī Kifāyatullāh Sāhib and started conversing with him. While speaking to him, they said: "Maulwī Sāhib, will we get food here or not?" When he heard this question, Maulwī Kifāyatullāh Sāhib became alert and said: "Miyā, this is not a public kitchen where anyone and everyone can eat. The guests of Hadrat eat here. The others do not." All praise is due to Allāh, these travellers were at least honest and they gave a frank reply: "Miyā, we actually resorted to this ploy [of claiming to be Hadrat's *murīds*] with the purpose of having a meal, but Maulwī Sāhib caught us out."

Once a person arrived and displayed very convincing sincerity and devotion towards Hadrat. Those who were present were swayed into thinking that he was one of Hadrat's staunch and faithful followers. He presented himself before Hadrat and pleaded a request for *bay'ah*. Hadrat cast him aside saying: "Go! There is

nothing here for you. I will never initiate you as my *murīd*." He started crying and pleaded with Hadrat's close associates to intercede on his behalf. However, everyone who interceded on his behalf was reprimanded. Hadrat said: "I already said I will not accept him as my *murīd*. Tell him not to remain here and that he must make his own arrangements for his meals. If he does not go, carry him out, and throw all his goods out with him."

Those who were present felt aggrieved by Hadrat's unusual treatment of this person. However, they had no option but to carry out his orders. They carried the traveller's goods out of the *khānqāh* and said to him: "You will not receive any food from Hadrat's house." The traveller did not stop displaying his affinity for Hadrat – even after this treatment. He cried and said: "No matter what, I will most certainly pledge *bay'ah*." Hakīm Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib felt sorry for the person, took him to his place, seated him and consoled him saying: "I will intercede on your behalf when I get the opportunity and get you to become Hadrat's *murīd*." The following day Hakīm Sāhib went to Hadrat and – before he could even utter a word – Hadrat said: "Where is the traveller? Why did you accommodate him? Organize transport for him and send him off." What could the Hakīm Sāhib say? He departed silently and decided to try again later. After '*asr*' he went to Hadrat again, but before he could utter a word, Hadrat said: "I already told you before. Why did you not send him off?" Hakīm Sāhib replied in a subdued tone: "Hadrat, how can we send off a guest in such a way?" Hadrat turned his face and said: "What fellowship!" Hakīm Sāhib returned to his place without a sound and found his guest with a book in which he was busy writing something. The moment he realized that Hakīm Sāhib was approaching, he shut the book hastily, wrapped it in his *juzdān* (small case for carrying books) and suspended it around his neck.

This placed Hakīm Sāhib on guard and he started thinking of how he could get hold of the the *juzdān* around the traveller's neck in

order to see what he had been writing. It was not easy for him to take a look at the book which the traveller was safely protecting around his neck. So, he engaged him in conversation throughout the night – until he was overcome by sleep. When he saw that the traveller had lost consciousness, he got up saying: "Very well, you may continue sleeping." The traveller slept and remained in a deep sleep. Hakīm Sāhib removed the *juzdān* from around his neck, carried it to a lamp and opened it. He saw some writing in English, Persian, Urdu and Arabic. On one page he saw a note which was addressed to one of the British governors. Amongst other things, it contained the following: "For the sake of the [British] government, I did not even bother about my *īmān* – let alone my life. Unfortunately, I was not received as I ought to have been received."

Hakīm Sāhib trembled with fear when he read this statement. He closed the book, placed it in the *juzdān*, hung it around the traveller's neck as before and went outside. The moment dawn broke, he made transport arrangements, went to the traveller and said to him: "Your transport is ready. You may leave now. You will reach your destination early." The traveller realized that his plot had been exposed while he was fast asleep. Therefore, he did not say anything. He placed his bedding under his arm, got up, lowered his head and meekly departed. Hakīm Sāhib then presented himself to Hadrat. Hadrat smiled and in a low tone he said: "I told you at the outset to send him off but you did not listen to me."

There are countless other incidents of this nature where Hadrat had flatly refused *bay'ah*. Later on it became evident that these people were unworthy of it. In the *Sharī'ah*, where the reward of giving to a beggar is mentioned, the masses err gravely in their understanding. On the basis of the following verse ...

أما السائل فلا تنهر

"As for the beggar, do not drive him away"

... many people wrongly assume that anyone who asks or begs from us must be given whatever is within our capacity to give. Regardless of whether such a person is able-bodied or not, healthy or ill, a swindler or a genuinely needy person – they assume that it would be impermissible for us to refuse anyone. However, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said that it is *ḥarām* for a person who is classified as *ghanī* (wealthy) and *qūwwat-e-kasb* (possessing the strength and ability to earn) to beg. To aid someone in *ḥarām* is also *ḥarām*. Thus, the prohibition of giving to such a beggar can be clearly established from the Sharī'ah.

In like manner, the liberality of some of the *shuyūkh* has caused them to make the mistake of initiating every person who requests *bay'ah* as a *murīd* – irrespective of whether the person is worthy or not, of whether he is proud or modest and humble, and irrespective of whether he is truly desirous of engaging in the remembrance of Allāh or whether he merely wants to do it for show and ostentation. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has personally prohibited us from teaching a person who is unworthy of being taught, and has likened the teaching of such a person to 'making a pig wear a necklace of jewels'. This prohibition is applicable to an even greater extent when it comes to spiritual knowledge – which is the most superior of all the branches of knowledge, for it is Divine Knowledge. To impart this knowledge to all and sundry is the worst of sins and is totally against the instruction of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The Shaykh who does not possess the insight to identify such eligibility is not worthy of the position of guiding others. If a spiritual physician cannot make such a diagnosis, his treatment will be insufficient, his consulting room [*khānqāh*] will be of no benefit, and his prescription of medication will not only be incomplete, but detrimental.

At present, the majority of beggars have merely adopted the appearance of beggars and they portray themselves as poor, poverty-stricken souls – despite the fact that they are not really in need. It is absolutely *ḥarām* and sinful to give anything to these

people who have made begging their occupation. Similarly, in this *fitnah*-saturated era, there are many 'seekers of the truth' who do not even know the meaning of 'seeking the truth'. The desires of their *nafs* has been given the name of *talab*, and in the process they have reduced this pure science to an ordinary custom and ritual – like so many other customs and rituals. If they only knew the measures and processes which essentially need to be followed when one is truly seeking something [when having a *talab* for something], then – by Allāh – they would desist from ever mentioning *talab*.

A person says that he wants to have children, but when he is informed that he would first have to perform a marriage to a woman, that he would have to pay her dowry, and that he would have to provide housing, food and clothing for her – then suddenly he becomes uneasy and says 'excuse me' from such formalities. Clearly, the *talab* of such a person is not a *talab*. He is merely a slave of his passions.

Similarly, a person wants to pledge *bay'ah* and says that he would like to reach Allāh ﷻ, but when he is informed that he would have to annihilate himself totally, that he would have to occupy himself with a certain objective by night and by day, that he would have to follow the Sunnah at every step of the way, and that he would have to observe the lawful and the prohibited (*halāl* and *harām*) in its entirety, he replies: "Janāb, you rather tell me to shackle my hands and feet and remain confined in prison. Forgive me, but I cannot even give up my habit of having two meals a day." To consider such a person to be a *talib* is *jahl-e-murakkab* (compounded ignorance). He is more worthy of being called a slave of his passions.

This was the way in which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to test the person's *talab*. Anyone who managed to pass this test was initiated into the *silsilah* and he was sure to derive some benefit or the other.

As for the one who failed this test ... not only was he deprived of *bay'ah*, but he was deprived of the Everlasting Bounty in quest of which he had claimed to be. It is not necessary for the masses to know the nature of passing or failing this spiritual examination. The discernment of the Shaykh's perception is sufficient. Thus, it is not necessary for us to search for the reasons why Hadrat had refused to accept a certain person's request for *bay'ah*.

Generally, he would accept the requests for *bay'ah* from the poor and needy without delay and he would only initiate the wealthy and those in positions of authority after some time. In fact, he considered it most appropriate to be cautious and guarded when it came to people in positions of authority, as well as family members, because they were by and large affected by their pride. Thus, they found it difficult to be initiated.

In most cases, he had no hesitation whatsoever in accepting the *bay'ah* of women. Whenever any woman made such a request, he would accept and instruct her to repent. However, he would always seat them behind a curtain and keep them away from his gaze. At times he would extend a cloth to the woman. She would then hold one end, while he would hold the other end. At other times, he would abstain from this as well.

Maulwī Nazar Muhammad Khān Sāhib relates: "I was very self-conscious by nature and could not tolerate my wife leaving the house or speaking to a strange man. Thus, when my wife was to pledge *bay'ah* to Hadrat, the thought crossed my mind that Hadrat would be able to hear her voice. It was surely Hadrat's *karāmat* for having gauged my thoughts. He said to me: 'Let her remain in the house and close the door.' I followed Hadrat's instructions. Hadrat came to the house and sat down with his back towards the door, behind which my wife was sitting. Without extending any cloth to her, he said: 'Listen – you must repeat whatever I say but do not allow your voice to reach my ears.'"

Hadrat was never in the habit of accepting *bay'ah* from children. If anyone brought a child and requested *bay'ah*, he would place his hand upon the child's head, make *du'ā'* for his blessings and righteousness and, at times, he would also blow on the child and say: "We will see when the time comes. What does this child know about *pīrī murīdī* (becoming a *murīd* at the hands of a Shaykh)?"

Hadrat did not approve of women travelling without any real need. Therefore, he did not like them to travel to Gangoh for the sake of pledging *bay'ah*. However, if in her enthusiasm, a woman arrived, he would not express any disapproval for fear that it might hurt her feelings. If any woman wrote to him for *bay'ah*, he would reply: "There is no need for you to travel here. I have accepted your *bay'ah*." This is known as *bay'at-e-Uthmānī* and there are many examples of this *bay'ah* amongst the wives of noblemen.

Before accepting *bay'ah*, he would instruct the majority of those who made such requests to first perform *istikhārah*. He would say to them: "As per the Sunnah, perform two *rak'ats* of *ṣalāh* with this intention and make the *du'ā'-e-istikhārah* which is mentioned in the Hadīth." That is:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقِيرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ

If, after the *istikhārah* the person still requested *bay'ah*, he would initiate the person. There were some people whom Hadrat had instructed to perform *istikhārah* several times and he only initiated them into the *silsilah* once full determination and sincere *ṭalab* had been ascertained.

Whenever educated people requested *bay'ah*, Hadrat would initially defer them saying: "I know nothing and I can give you nothing." He would first test the person's *ṭalab* and, if the person was still determined, he would explain the purpose of *bay'ah* to him saying: "The purpose of *bay'ah* is for a person to do something, and in

order to do that, he would have to come and stay here for a few months. If he cannot do this, what is the benefit of becoming a *murīd*?" If the person persisted and said: "The mere blessings of entering the *silsilah* is also a great bounty", he would admit him into the *silsilah* and instruct him into repentance.

Only on rare occasions would he accept *bay'ah* from students who had not completed their studies as yet. In fact, accepting *bay'ah* from students was virtually non-existent. On one occasion, a student from Pānīpat came to him. Hadrat said to him: "Complete your studies first and then we will see." Students are argumentative by nature and this student was no different. He said: "Hadrat, Allāh ﷻ Alone knows who will still be alive by the time I complete my studies." Hadrat replied: "The work of *Dīn* never comes to an end. If you get the *taufīq* (inspiration), someone after me will accept your *bay'ah*." The student said: "Hadrat, I could die before you." Hadrat replied: "It will be excellent if you had to pass away while having this *ṭalab*. You will certainly be rewarded." The student did not remain silent. He persisted in his request saying: "My heart really desires this – make me your *murīd*." At this, Hadrat became angry. He got up from where he was lying down and said: "You are a student! Very well, tell me what is the meaning of a *murīd*?" He replied: "A person who intends doing something." Hadrat said: "You do not even know the meaning of a *murīd*, yet you have come to become a *murīd*! This word is derived from *bāb if'āl* from which the *hamzah* had been removed. Thus, the word '*murīd*' refers to a person whose will has been removed and therefore he accepts whatever the *pīr* says without having a will of his own." Upon hearing this the student regretted his actions and remained silent without making any further requests of becoming a *murīd*.

It was the habit of the majority of the students to present themselves before Hadrat after completing their studies and receiving their certificates, before departing for their homes. They would go to him with this in mind: "Since I am going home, let me pledge *bay'ah* at

the same time, and then I will proceed home." Hadrat did not consider this to be a sincere *ṭalab*. To make matters worse, some of them would merely pledge *bay'ah* and go to their villages and towns with the intention of making others their *murīds*. Hadrat had heard of one such person. This made him extremely angry and he grieved over this profusely. Consequently, he became extremely hesitant in accepting the *bay'ah* of Bengalis. On several occasions he mentioned: "These people return to their homes and assume the position of *pīrs*. They are astray themselves and lead others astray as well."

Hadrat considered it desirable to be in a state of *wudū'* when pledging *bay'ah*. Since he was in *wudū'* most of the time, he did not set aside any specific time for accepting *bay'ah*. Whenever he liked, he would instruct the seeker (*tālib*) to perform *wudū'* and – once he presented himself before Hadrat – he would instruct him to repent. Despite this, he preferred accepting *bay'ah* after a *fard ṣalāh* – especially after the '*asr* or *jumu'ah ṣalāhs*.

Those who were fortunate enough to become linked to his affectionate hand were made to pledge *bay'ah* to him. Hadrat did not restrict himself to individual or collective *bay'ah*. At times he would initiate a single person, while at other times he would initiate eight to ten people at once. There were times when countless people were initiated in one sitting. It was his habit to have both the hands of the *tālib* between his palms. If there were several people, they would hold each other's hands and Hadrat would hold the hands of the two people at either sides. He would occasionally break this habit by seating them all in front of him and initiating them into the *silsilah*.

He generally uttered the same words at the time of *bay'ah*. However, if there was something specific in the person that needed rectification, or if he perceived that the person was involved in a particular sin, he would change the wording slightly and instruct

him to repent as usual. After accepting the person's *bay'ah*, he would draw particular attention to the issue which he felt needed rectification. For example, if a wealthy person was initiated as a *murīd* and he had not performed *hajj* as yet, or if he was in the habit of not paying his *zakāh*, he would advise him accordingly. If a person was from a *bid'atī* family, he would lecture him about *bid'ah*. In short, since the objective of *bay'ah* is the rectification of one's condition and making up for past losses – and not the mere repetition of words – he did not suffice with the same wording nor did he follow the same procedure with every single person. At the same time, the words he uttered for the renewal of *īmān* and the promise of repentance were very comprehensive and decisive. It included all the necessities, and therefore there was rarely any real need to make changes.

In essence, *bay'ah* refers to the renewal of repentance, to which an accepted and just servant of Allāh ﷻ – the Shaykh – is made a witness. Hadrat therefore adhered to the Sharī'ah in translating the verse from the Qur'ān which Allāh ﷻ had revealed for this purpose and which had remained the practice of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

When accepting *bay'ah*, Hadrat would lower his head and address the *talīb* saying: "Say: I believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Prophets, in fate (*taqdīr*) – that the good and bad thereof is all from Allāh – and in life after death. I repent from *kufr*, *shirk*, *bid'ah*, and all other sins. I promise I will not speak lies, I will not steal, I will not commit adultery, I will not slander anyone. I promise to perform the five daily *ṣalāh*, fast during the month of *Ramadān*, perform *hajj* if I have the means, pay *zakāh* if it is compulsory upon me and – if I commit a sin – I will repent immediately. I pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of Rashīd Aḥmad in the Chistīyyah, Naqshbandīyyah, Qādirīyyah and Suhrawardīyyah branches."

Hadrat would then release his hands and give a short, but comprehensive piece of advice. He would say to the person: "The

bay'ah is actually a promise which is made to Allāh ﷻ, and therefore, a person must be mindful of not breaking it. The essence of *bay'ah* is that a person should remain true to his word, he must constantly seek Allāh's Pleasure and be mindful of following the Sunnah all the time, without stepping out of its limits. Thereafter, the methods of engaging in *dhikr* and *shughl* – as taught by the *buzurgs* – are all prescribed with the purpose of entrenching the essence of *bay'ah* into one's heart. The one who has the courage, must carry them out. If he cannot, he must ensure that his *ṣalāh* and fasting are in order. This is sufficient."

Hadrat used to lower his head at the time of *bay'ah* for the sake of internal spiritual concentration – which is required all the time, but specifically at the time when initiating a *ṭālib*. The fruits of Hadrat lowering his head are still clearly visible today. Even the person who had pledged *bay'ah* at his hands, yet never had the opportunity of meeting him again, still adheres to his promise to a lesser or greater extent. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows the power of the magnetic force of Hadrat's concentration. It has caused thousands of hard-hearted souls to become so enamoured by him that people go around in search of them today.

I received a letter from Munshī Mumtāz Aḥmad Ṣāhib of Ānāulah. He writes: "I had the opportunity of meeting Hadrat on 12 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1320 A.H. I pledged *bay'ah* to him on that day and returned to my village. I never had the opportunity of meeting him again." Despite this, every word in his letter demonstrates that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was his beloved, and that he was the lover. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was his quest, and he was in quest of him. I now present to the reader a couplet which he had written in this regard:

*I saw a holy man in Gangoh.
I saw a chosen servant of Allāh.
Which excellent quality of his should I describe?*

*[Every quality of his is beyond description].
I saw an angel in the form of a human.*

It was always Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's habit to ask about his associates. I do not remember him ever acting contrary to this. No matter how distant or unknown a *murīd* may have been, he would certainly ask him what his name was. If any *murīd* made the request that Hadrat should teach him something to read, he would teach him invocations from the Ahādīth and say: "You must look at how much time you have at your disposal and only do as much as you can manage. Do little, but do it steadfastly. It is very important to uphold whatever you start. It is not correct to do it one day and leave it the next. Nothing is achieved without steadfastness – especially in matters of *Dīn*. You need absolute dedication. A *pīr* cannot compel his *murīds*. He can merely guide and teach. It is your responsibility to do what he teaches. A person should do whatever he can and continue to repent for his shortcomings, because man is always prone to error."

Many sincere villagers used to come to Hadrat, and he would always speak to them in a very cordial manner. Hadrat saw an example of the Sahābah's ﷺ simplicity in their lives. Thus, whenever these villagers would come to him, they would think that they had come to their own kind. Hadrat would speak to them in their village dialect and would use simple and straightforward words. It was a remarkable and pleasing scene to watch him converse with them. These sincere, unpretentious and unassuming people would converse with Imām Rabbānī without using any formalities. City dwellers may have considered this to be uncouth and even audacious, but in truth it was an example of the blessed assembly of Rasūlullāh ﷺ which would be presented right before our eyes. Those who were present were always able to learn certain internal [spiritual] and external things, which would have been difficult for them to learn under normal circumstances.

Allāh ﷻ had made these villagers so simple and unsophisticated, that they could have been referred to as 'foolish'. Self-professed 'cultured' people would have considered them disrespectful and uncouth. On one occasion, Hadrat was delivering a talk to a large audience. Without any formality, a young villager asked: "Hadratjī, what does a woman's private part look like?" Glory to Allāh! All those who were present lowered their heads, but Hadrat was not discomfited in the least and spontaneously responded: "It looks like a grain of wheat."

Villagers are generally free of pretension, airs, snobbishness and other hypocritical qualities. That is why Hadrat never hesitated in accepting their *bay'ah*. They would generally come to Gangoh for the *jumu'ah salāh* and, after the *salāh*, they would come in droves to meet Hadrat. They would crowd his assembly and – with a "Hadratjī, *salām*" – they would sit down wherever they found a place. They would openly ask him any *mas'alah* they wished and would explicitly express whatever doubts they had. Any newcomer, who wanted to pledge *bay'ah*, would seat himself near Hadrat and say: "Hadratjī, make me your *murīd*." Hadrat would immediately instruct him into repentance and initiate him into the *silsilah*.

On one occasion, a few villagers pledged *bay'ah* to him. They asked him a few *masā'il* and departed a short while later. They placed their fighting-sticks (*lāthī*) on their shoulders and – saying "Hadratjī, *salām*" – they left. Imām Rabbānī's face and tone was the embodiment of joy and pleasure at the time. When they left, he said: "Their *bay'ah* is a genuine *bay'ah*. They sought a refuge and a sanctuary and, once they had found it, they forgot all their worries."

We found Hadrat adopting different attitudes when it came to accepting gifts from his associates. He would gladly accept gifts from some people, and flatly refuse such gifts from others. In fact, when some needy attendant offered him a gift, he would at first refuse saying: "I do not need it, whereas you are in need of it. You

should rather use it for yourself." However, if he saw that the person felt dejected because of his refusal, or on the verge of crying, he would accept the gift and keep it next to him.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was not averse to the unexpected arrival of things. The mark of a *mutavakkil* (one who places his full trust and reliance upon Allāh ﷻ) is that he never refuses anything which he receives without having sought it. This is because one can never be independent of a Bounty from Allāh ﷻ at any time. Obviously, if he does not receive it, he should not hanker after it. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī possessed this quality to a lofty extent – rarely seen in others. Although the majority of his attendants and associates would have done anything for him, one would not find a single incident in which he had asked any of them for anything, nor did he ever desire anything and express his need for it to them so that they could assist him in obtaining it. At the same time, if – of his own accord – anyone brought something to him with sincerity and open-heartedness, he would not refuse it. He would accept it happily and would make the giver happy as well.

Hadrat's heart was filled with the eternal treasure of love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Due to this love, he had acquired total independence from the world and its fleeting effects and possessions. He could not conceal this contentment in his heart. He tried his utmost to conceal this independence – especially upon receiving gifts with gladness – but, when a special 'drink' has filled a person, it becomes difficult for the person to conceal its fragrance. Towards the end of his life he became afraid of accepting gifts – even from his close associates – and started to flatly refuse them all.

On one occasion Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib offered him a gift. Since he had been Hadrat's focus of attention since his childhood, he insisted that Hadrat should accept it, but Hadrat refused. Each time he insisted, Hadrat replied: "I do not need it." Another devoted associate of his also offered him something. He refused, saying:

"Allāh ﷻ has given me so much that my guests and I are unable to eat it all. What will I do with this?" When a third attendant's gift was not accepted, he said: "What benefit is there in me adding this money to my other money, whereas you would be able to fulfil many of your needs. It will be of no use to me. It will merely lie with the rest of my money." After the person had insisted several times, Hadrat placed his hand on the money and said: "Very well, I have taken it. Now you take it on my behalf and spend it on your wife and children."

Hadrat disapproved of the prevailing custom of sweetmeats being handed out at the time of *bay'ah*. In fact, he considered it a *bid'ah* to adhere to this custom. Thus, the occasions of pledging *bay'ah* to him were generally kept very simple. He would merely summon the person whenever he felt it appropriate and accept his *bay'ah* in the Sunnah method. Yes, if a person possessed true sincerity within himself and brought whatever little sweetmeats were available to him, he would not object to distributing it among those who were present. In short, he was the embodiment of the words:

وما أنا من المتكلفين

"I am not of those who follow unnecessary formalities."

There was simplicity in every matter, and his Sunnah-enamoured heart would become restless in its yearning for simplicity. A poet rightly says:

*O Allāh! The one who will not die at this simplicity
is fighting without a sword in his hand!*

There were great, erudite personalities amongst Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's associates. We can safely say that each one of them was equal to a large group, and was accepted as a large group. This is especially true with regard to those '*ulamā*' who depict the words

of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَذْنَاكُمْ

"The superiority of an 'ālim over an [ignorant] worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest amongst you."

فَقِيْهَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ أَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

"A single faqīh is more severe against Shayṭān than a thousand [ignorant] worshippers."

If Muslims are the rose-gardens of this world, then each one of Imām Rabbānī's associates [each *murīd* and *khalīfah*] represents the rose essence – every drop of which is obtained from countless petals. Hadrat's associates numbered no less than 50 000. Several thousand of them are '*ulamā*' and students of *Dīn*. He did not have any register in which the names of his associates were recorded. It would therefore be impossible to provide the exact number. However, over fifty years of his life were spent in guiding and instructing people. During this lengthy period, he accepted *bay'ah* from fifty, and often more than fifty people at a time during most days. Towards the latter part of his life, when his popularity became widespread, people began flooding to Gangoh in droves upon droves. No one will be able to correctly estimate the number of people who had gone to him during this period.

Some of his *khulafā*' and famous associates will be enumerated in the next chapter. What I would like to highlight though, is that the majority of people who had aligned themselves directly to him were '*ulamā*'. The wealthy were in the minority. The remainder were a combination of city dwellers, villagers, noblemen, the frail, traders, landlords, labourers, farmers and artisans. His associates hail from every district and every region. His guidance and instruction was not confined to the subcontinent of India. It extended to the centre

of the world – the Hijāz [Makkah and Madīnah]. There was no region or area in the populous subcontinent of India which was not affiliated to him. Just as Bengal and Punjab were irrigated from this flowing river, the regions of Sindh, Decca, Madras and the central states all became green and lush due to him. What can then possibly be said about the fortunate districts and regions which were close to Hadrat's hometown?

The Hadīth states:

بدا الإسلام غريبا وسيعود كما بدأ

*"Islam started as an unfamiliar and unknown entity,
and will return as it had started."*

Islam – which started as a stranger, outsider and unfamiliar person, without any helper and supporter – always had poor and poverty-stricken people who have hastened to adopt it and propagate it. In like manner, the glittering lamp of Gangoh – which had actually been ignited by the lamp of Prophethood – was by and large disseminated by the same poor and underprivileged people. Due to their engrossment in the fleeting chattels of this world, the wealthy and affluent did not take the opportunity to derive any benefit from this glittering light – with the exception of a few affluent men and women whom Allāh ﷻ had Willed to be included amongst this group of poor people. It is with reference to them that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had said:

فطوبى للغرباء

"Glad tidings to the unknown souls."

Such people were certainly blessed with the delightful delicacies of the Divine Table-spread.

ذلك فضل الله يؤتيه من يشاء،
والله ذو الفضل العظيم

"This is solely due to the Grace of Allāh, which He bestows on whomever He Wills. Allāh is Possessor of Mighty Grace."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has instructed us to accord due respect to the respected and honourable personalities of every nation. This applies especially to those who are part of the *ummah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. If we had to present an example of one of these rulers and governors of states, who had pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, it would have to be Nawāb Sultān Jahān Begum, the governess of Bhopal – may Allāh ﷻ perpetuate her government.

Together with worldly authority, position and regal power, Allāh ﷻ had blessed her with *Dīnī* honour and dignity. The fruit of her love for the poor and righteous was that – one year after she ascended the throne – she was blessed with the honour of *bay'at-e-'Uthmānī* to the Makhdūm al-'Ālam Quṭb al-Waqt Shaykh [Imām Rabbānī].

From the time she ascended the throne, the governess was in search of a *Shaykh-e-kāmil*. She had planned to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of A'la Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh as soon as she was able to travel to Makkah Mu'azzamah. However, she could not undertake the journey as soon as she would have liked to and, in the meantime, A'lā Hadrat had passed away. From amongst A'lā Hadrat's khulafā', she felt no affinity towards anyone other than Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and thus she started corresponding with him.

As per his habit, Imām Rabbānī refused her request at first, and in his reply to her request, he undertook a subtle test of the sincerity of her quest (*talab*). The fortunate and chaste woman's *talab* was a genuine, determined *talab*.

At the beginning of Rabī ath-Thānī 1323 A.H., Hadrat's devoted associate, Maulānā Qādī Muhīyy ad-Dīn Sāhib Murādābādī – the judge of Bhopal – arrived in Gangoh as the representative of the governess, and Hadrat accepted her *bay'ah*.

Prior to this, Hadrat had already received two consecutive requests from her, which she had sent via Mīr Mansab 'Alī Sāhib Munshī. Hadrat's reply was in actual fact a test of her *ṭalab*. I consider it appropriate to quote this letter here:

"From the servant, Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, *may Allāh pardon him*. As-salāmu 'alaykum. This servant is astonished. I make *du'ā'* for you. I received your letter containing a request for *bay'ah* which you had sent via Nawāb Sultān Jahān Begum several days ago. However, due to my old age and various ailments, I have become quite weak. Furthermore, I was hesitant in replying to your esteemed letter, and thus I did not take the opportunity to reply to it. Now I have received another letter from you, requesting a reply.

I shall now dictate the reply: A person pledges *bay'ah* for two reasons: (1) To acquire *nisbat* (affinity) and obtain the blessings of *ṭarīqah*. In order to acquire this, a person needs to remain in the company of a spiritual guide for a lengthy period. It is obvious that I cannot come there, nor will it be appropriate for Begum Sāhibah to come here. Without this, *bay'ah* is a waste of time. (2) The other reason for *bay'ah* is to establish a bond with the *buzurg* and this is done solely to enter into the *silsilah* (spiritual chain). First of all, I do not consider this of any benefit. Secondly, the governess will look upon me with affection, kindness and attention and this will cause me much regret. (3) When people come to know of the governess's affiliation with me, many needy people will start to harass me into interceding on their behalf, asking you for your help. Some of these requests for intercession will be worthy, while others will be wholly unworthy. Fourthly, if the governess already has an affinity towards me, she would already have fulfilled this second

purpose [of *bay'ah* mentioned above].

If the governess insists, I will accept, but I will do so on two conditions: (1) There must be no change in her previous attitude towards me [she must not accord me any more respect than prior to her *bay'ah*]. There must be no sort of 'favouritism' towards me. (2) The bond of *bay'ah* must not be mentioned to anyone. If these two conditions are accepted, then I accept her *bay'ah* on the order that she must make it her hallmark to emulate the Sunnah and abstain from *bid'ah* (innovation). Moreover, she must remain engaged in love for the truth and in establishing justice among her subjects. Was salām."

The reply to the above letter was brought to Hadrat by Qādī Muhīyy ad-Dīn Sāhib:

"To his excellence, Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib, *may Allāh perpetuate his blessings*. As-salāmu 'alaykum. I received your distinguished letter through Munshī Sayyid Maṣṣab 'Alī. Maṣṣab 'Alī's reply to it is presented to Hadrat via Maulwī Muḥammad Muhīyy ad-Dīn Aḥmad Sāhib, the judge of Bhopal. My request will be conveyed via Maṣṣab 'Alī and the verbal request of Qādī Sāhib. *Inshā Allāh*, I will most certainly benefit from Hadrat's blessings.

Was salām, with respect. That is all.

Dated: 2nd Rabī' ath-Thānī 1323 A.H." (Stamped and sealed.)

It was the governess's good fortune that, after visiting the Haramayn, she was able to attach herself to the noble personage of Qutb al-'Ālam [Imām Rabbānī]. This happened only two months before his demise. Had there been an eight-week delay, she would have had to express the same regret which she had when, on the 12th of Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1317 A.H., A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had passed away. However, Allāh ﷻ had already Willed for the esteemed governess to be blessed with this eternal spiritual

affiliation, together with the worldly wealth and position which He had bestowed upon her. She could not bear the thought of this deprivation and, for that reason, she repeatedly wrote to Hadrat until he finally accepted her *bay'ah* through Qādī Sāhib. This happened either on the 5th or the 6th of Rabī' ath-Thānī 1323 A.H. Hadrat passed away in that same year on the 8th of Jumādā ath-Thānīyah.

SPIRITUAL CHAINS (LINEAGES)

*The nafs (ego) can never be reformed,
except in the shade of a Pīr.
So hold on with determination to the hem of a Saint.*

Imām Rabbānī Murshidunā wa Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Rashīd Aḥmad Muḥaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh* pledged *bay'ah*, remained in the company of and obtained *ijāzah* (*khilāfat*) from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Muḥājir Makkī *rahimahullāh*. A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's link of affiliation and companionship to Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ through several chains, has been mentioned in *Diyā' al-Qulūb*. I consider it essential to quote these to the reader and to those who are affiliated to the Gangohī court.

The Chishtīyyah Sābirīyyah Quddūsīyyah Lineage:

1. Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Anṣārī Ayyūbī Nu'mānī Muḥaddith Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. (He passed away on 8 Jumādā ath-Thānīyah 1323 A.H. and is buried in Gangoh.)



2. A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Fārūqī Muḥājir Makkī *rahimahullāh*.
(12 Jumādā ath-Thānīyah 1317 A.H. Buried in Jannatul Mu'allā, Makkah Mu'azzamah.)



3. Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad 'Alawī Jhanjhānwī *rahimahullāh*.
(4 Ramadān 1259 A.H. Buried in Jhanjhānah.)⁹



4. Hājī Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahīm Fāṭimī Shahīd Wilāyatī
rahimahullāh.¹⁰

(27 Dhū al-Qa'dah 1246 A.H. Buried in Panjtār, Wilāyat.)



5. Shāh 'Abd al-Bārī Siddīqī Amrohī *rahimahullāh*.¹¹

(11 Sha'bān 1226 A.H. Buried in Amrohah.)



6. Shāh 'Abd al-Hādī Siddīqī Amrohī *rahimahullāh*.

(4 Ramadān 1190 A.H. Buried in Amrohah.)



7. Sayyid 'Idud Dīn *rahimahullāh*.¹²

(7 Rajab 1172 A.H.)



8. Shāh Muḥammad Makkī Ja'farī *rahimahullāh*.¹³

(11 Rajab. Buried in Amrohah.)



⁹ His grave is in Jhanjhānah, district Muzaffarnagar, which is about sixteen kilometres from Thānabhawan. His grave is to the right of the Musjid, in line with the floor, right at the entrance of the Musjid.

¹⁰ He was a companion of Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib Barelwī Mujaddid *rahimahullāh*.

¹¹ He is the grandson of his Shaykh, Shāh 'Abd al-Hādī. He is a *sayyid* by lineage, and known as a Siddīqī.

¹² In the beginning, he was known by the name 'Iz Liddīn. However, Shāh Rahmān Bakhsh, who is from the progeny of Shāh 'Abd al-Hādī, learnt that his name was 'Idud Dīn. This name is now recorded in all the chains so that the tie of kinship and the chain may be reliable. He is the son of Hāmid, who is Shaykh Muḥammad's brother.

¹³ He is the son of his Shaykh, Shāh Muḥammadī. He was born in Makkah Mu'azzamah.

9. Shāh Sayyid Muḥammadī *rahimahullāh*.
(3 Rajab 1107 A.H. Buried in Akbarābād.)



10. Shaykh Muḥibbullāh *Siddīqī Ilāhābādī rahimahullāh*.
(Thursday, 9 Rajab 1058 A.H. Buried in Ilāhābād.)



11. Shāh Abū Sa'īd Nu'mānī Naushervānī Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.
(2 Rabī' al-Awwal 1045 A.H. Buried in Gangoh, Sarā'e.)



12. Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Balkhī Fārūqī *rahimahullāh*.
(8 Rajab 1035 A.H. Buried in Balkh.)



13. Shāh Jalāl ad-Dīn Thānesarī Fārūqī *rahimahullāh*.
(Friday, 14 Dhū al-Hijjah 989 A.H. Buried in Thānesar.)



14. Quṭb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī Nu'mānī *rahimahullāh*.
(Tuesday, 23 Jumādā ath-Thāniyah 944 A.H. Buried in Gangoh, Sarā'e.)



15. Shaykh Muḥammad Fārūqī Radaulwī *rahimahullāh*.
(898 A.H. Buried in Radaulī.)



16. Shaykh Aḥmad Fārūqī Radaulwī *rahimahullāh*.
(17 *Safar* 882 A.H. Buried in Radaulī.)



17. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Fārūqī Radaulwī *rahimahullāh*.
(15 Jumādā ath-Thāniyah 837 A.H. Buried in Radaulī.)



18. Shaykh Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad 'Uthmānī Pānīpatī *rahimahullāh*.

(13 Rabī' al-Awwal 765 A.H. Buried in Pānīpat.)



19. Shaykh Shams ad-Dīn Turk 'Alawī Pānīpatī *rahimahullāh*.
(19 Sha'bān 716 A.H. Buried in Pānīpat.)



20. Imām al-Millāh Makhdūm 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Alī Ahmad Sābir
Husaynī rahimahullāh.¹⁴
(13 Rabī' al-Awwal 690 A.H. Buried in Pīrān Kalīr.)



21. Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn Shakarganj Fārūqī *rahimahullāh*.
(5 Muḥarram 668, 669 or 690 A.H. Buried in Pākpatan.)



22. Shaykh Quṭb ad-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī Aushī *Husaynī
rahimahullāh*.
(14 Rabī' al-Awwal 633 A.H. Buried in Delhi Kuhnah.)



23. Imām at-Tarīqah Khwājah Mu'īn ad-Dīn *Hasan Sanjārī
rahimahullāh*.¹⁵ (Monday, 6th Rajab 623 A.H. Buried in Ajmer.)



24. Shāh Abū an-Nūr 'Uthmān Hārūnī *rahimahullāh*.
(6 Shawwāl 623 A.H. Buried in Makkah Mu'azzamah.)



25. Munīr ad-Dīn Hājī Sharīf Zandanī *rahimahullāh*.
(3 Rajab 580 A.H. Buried in Zandanah, Bukhārā.)

¹⁴ He is the son of Shāh 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Abd as-Salām ibn Shāh Sayf
ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn *Hadrat* Ghauth ath-Thaqalayn Abū
Muḥammad Muḥīyy ad-Dīn Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī
rahimahullāh. In other words, he is the great-grandson of Shaykh 'Abd
al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*.

¹⁵ He is a *Husaynī* by lineage. The Chishtīyyah lineage is attributed to
him.

↓

26. Qutb ad-Dīn Maudūd Chishtī Husaynī *rahimahullāh*.
(1 Rajab 527 A.H. Buried in Chisht, Khurāsān.)

↓

27. Sayyid Nāsir ad-Dīn Abū Yūsuf Chishtī Husaynī *rahimahullāh*.
(1 Jumādā al-Ūlā 459 A.H. Buried in Chisht.)

↓

28. Sayyid Abū Muḥammad Muḥtaram Chishtī Husaynī *rahimahullāh*. (4 Rabī' al-Awwal 411 A.H. Buried in Chisht.)

↓

29. Abū Aḥmad Abdāl Hasanī *rahimahullāh*.
(1 or 3 Jumādā ath-Thāniyah 359 A.H.)

↓

30. Khwājah Sharaf ad-Dīn Abū Is-ḥāq Shāmī *rahimahullāh*.
(14 Rabī' ath-Thānī 329 A.H. Buried in Makkah.)

↓

31. Khwājah Karīm ad-Dīn Mamshād 'Alī Dīnaurī *rahimahullāh*.
(14 Muḥarram 299 A.H.)

↓

32. Khwājah Amīn ad-Dīn Abū Hubayrah Baṣrī *rahimahullāh*.
(7 Shawwāl 279 A.H. Buried in Basra.)

↓

33. Khwājah Sadīd ad-Dīn Hudhayfah Mar'ashī *rahimahullāh*.
(14 or 24 Shawwāl 252 A.H.)

↓

34. Sultān al-'Ārifīn Abū Is-ḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham Fārūqī *rahimahullāh*.¹⁶

¹⁶ In the beginning he was the *amīr* of Balkh. He remained in *mujāhadah* in a cave in Nishābūr for nine years. He then proceeded to Makkah Mu'azzamah over a period of fourteen years. He also received *khilāfat* from Imām Bāqir. His grave is in Shām, near the grave of

(1 Shawwāl 157 or 156 A.H. Buried in Shām.)



35. Khwājah Abū al-Fayḍ Fudayl ibn 'Iyād *rahimahullāh*.
(Muḥarram 187 A.H. Buried in Makkah Mu'azzamah.)



36. Khwājah Abū al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd *rahimahullāh*.
(27 Ṣafar 176 or 178 A.H. Buried in Basra.)



37. Sayyidunā Imām Ḥasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh*.¹⁷
(1 Rajab or 4 Muḥarram 110 A.H. Buried in Basra.)



38. Maulānā Abū al-Ḥasan wa Abū Turāb, cousin and son-in-law of
Rasūlullāh ﷺ, 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



39. Nabī al-Ḥaramayn wa Wasīlatunā fī ad-Dārayn Muḥammad
Mustafā ﷺ.

(Monday, 12 Rabī' al-Awwal 11 A.H. Buried in Madīnah
Munawwarah, may Allāh ﷻ increase its sanctity.)

The Chishtīyyah Nizāmīyyah Quddūsīyyah Lineage:

Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī's link of affiliation and *ijāzah* (permission)
to Qutb al-'Ālam Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is
the same as the previous one. The lineage beyond that is as follows:

14. Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* received *ijāzah*
in the Nizāmīyyah *Tarīqah* from:



Ḥadrat Lūt ؑ.

¹⁷ He was the freed slave of Ḥadrat Zayd ibn Thābit Anṣārī ؓ.

15. Shaykh Durwesh ibn Muḥammad Qāsim Audhī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
16. Sayyid Badhan Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
17. Sayyid Ajmal Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
18. Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
19. Makhdūm Jahānyān Jahān Gasht *rahimahullāh*.
↓
20. Khwājah Naṣīr ad-Dīn Raushan Chirāg Dehlī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
21. Sultān al-Mashā'ikh Imām al-Millāh Shaykh Nizām ad-Dīn Auliya'¹⁸ ibn Muḥammad Aḥmad Budāyūnī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
22. Khwājah Farīd ad-Dīn Shakarganj *rahimahullāh*, leading up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.



Qutb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī also had permission in this lineage from his *murshid* (spiritual mentor) Shaykh Durwesh ibn Muḥammad Qāsim Audhī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

15. Shaykh Durwesh *rahimahullāh*.

¹⁸ The word *auliyā'* is the plural of *walī*. The Shaykh *rahimahullāh* is a single person who is considered to be equivalent to many *auliyā'*. He is therefore well-known by the title 'Auliya'. He passed away on 18 Rabī' ath-Thānī 725 A.H. His blessed grave is on the outskirts of Delhi. The Nizāmīyyah lineage is attributed to him, just as the Sābirīyyah lineage is attributed to his *pīr bhāi* (fellow *khalīfah*), Makhdūm 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Alī Aḥmad Sābir *rahimahullāh*.



16. Shaykh Sa'dullāh *rahimahullāh*.



17. Shaykh Aflahallāh *rahimahullāh*.



18. Shaykh Sadr ad-Dīn Tabīb Dulhā *rahimahullāh*.



19. Sultān al-Mashā'ikh Shaykh Nizām ad-Dīn Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

This *silsilah* is known as Chishtīyyah Nizāmīyyah Aflahīyyah.



Qutb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī also received permission in this lineage from his *murshid* (spiritual mentor) Shaykh Durwesh ibn Muḥammad Qāsim Audhī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

15. Shaykh Durwesh *rahimahullāh*.



16. Miyān ibn Ḥakam Audhī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Sayyid Sadr ad-Dīn Audhī *rahimahullāh*.



18. Sayyid Muḥammad Gīsūdarāz *rahimahullāh*.



19. Khwājah Naṣīr ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*.



20. Sultān al-Mashā'ikh Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Auliya' *rahimahullāh*, up to the end.

This *silsilah* is known as Chishtīyyah Nizāmīyyah Gīsudarāzīyyah Qāsimīyyah.

The 'Alīyyah Qādirīyyah Quddūsīyyah Lineage:

Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* enjoyed the *nisbat* of *bay'ah*, companionship and *ijāzah* from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sūhib through the previously-mentioned links to Quṭb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

14. Quṭb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.



15. Durwesh Muḥammad ibn Qāsim Audhī *rahimahullāh*.



16. Sayyid Badhan Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Sayyid Ajmal Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



18. Makhdūm Jahānyān Jahān Gasht *rahimahullāh*.



19. Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*.



20. Shaykh Abū al-Makārim Fādīl *rahimahullāh*.



21. Shaykh Quṭb ad-Dīn Abū al-Ghayth *rahimahullāh*.



22. Shaykh Shams ad-Dīn 'Alī Aṣḥab *rahimahullāh*.



23. Shaykh Shams ad-Dīn Haddād *rahimahullāh*.



24. Imām al-Auliya' Sayyid at-Tā'ifah Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn

'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*.



25. Shaykh Abū Sa'īd Makhzūmī¹⁹ *rahimahullāh*.



26. Shaykh Abū al-Hasan Qurashī 'Alī al-Hakkārī²⁰ *rahimahullāh*.



27. Shaykh Abū al-Farah Tarsūsī²¹ *rahimahullāh*.



28. Shaykh 'Abd al-Wāhid Tamīmī *rahimahullāh*.



29. Shaykh Abū Bakr Shiblī *rahimahullāh*.



30. Shaykh Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*.



31. Shaykh Sarīyy²² Saqaṭīyy *rahimahullāh*.



32. Shaykh Ma'rūf Karkhī *rahimahullāh*.



33. Shaykh Dā'ūd Tā'ī *rahimahullāh*.



34. Shaykh Habīb 'Ajamī *rahimahullāh*.



¹⁹ The word 'Makhzūmī' is attributed to the residential district of Yazīd ibn Makhzūm in Baghdad.

²⁰ Hakkār is a town in Shām (Syria).

²¹ Tarsūs is an Islamic city in Maghrib (North Africa).

²² His name is Sarīyy and it means 'a leader and a young man'. Saqaṭ refers to an item which has fallen down. He had a shop in Baghdad where fallen items were sold and that is how he became known as Saqaṭīyy.

35. Imām Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh*.



36. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib ؑ.



37. The leader of the universe, Muḥammad Mujtabā ؑ.



Hadrat Ghauth ath-Thaqalayn Muḥīyy ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* received a paternal *ijāzah* in this *silsilah* as follows:

24. Ghauth ath-Thaqalayn *rahimahullāh*.



25. Abū Sālih *rahimahullāh*.



26. Mūsā Jangī Daust *rahimahullāh*.



27. Sayyid 'Abdullāh Jīlī *rahimahullāh*.



28. Sayyid Yahyā Zāhid *rahimahullāh*.



29. Sayyid Mūsā Mūrith *rahimahullāh*.



30. Sayyid Dā'ūd Mūrith *rahimahullāh*.



31. Sayyid Mūsā al-Jaun²³ *rahimahullāh*.



²³ The word '*jaun*' means both black and white. He had a wheatish complexion and was therefore known as 'Jaun'. Others are of the opinion that he was a Hasanī from his father's side and a Husaynī from his mother's side and was therefore given the title of 'Jaun'.

32. Sayyid ‘Abdullāh al-Muḥidd *rahimahullāh*.



33. Imām Ḥasan Muthannā²⁴ *rahimahullāh*.



34. Imām Ḥasan *rahimahullāh*.



35. [Ḥadrat] ‘Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



36. Ḥadrat Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This *silsilah* is known as Jīlānīyyah Ābā’īyyah.



Qutb al-‘Ālam ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* also had *ijāzah* in this *silsilah* as follows:

15. Ḥadrat Ibrāhīm Ḥasanī *rahimahullāh*.



16. Shāh Mūsā *rahimahullāh*.



17. Shaykh Aḥmad Jīlī *rahimahullāh*.



18. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh*.



19. Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan *rahimahullāh*.



20. Shaykh Abū an-Naṣr *rahimahullāh*.

²⁴ His father's name was also Ḥasan. That is why he is called ‘Muthannā’ (which means ‘twice’).



21. Shaykh Abū Sālih *rahimahullāh*.



22. Ghauth ath-Thaqalayn Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*, leading up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This *silsilah* is known as Qādirīyyah Ibrāhīmīyyah.



Hadrat Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh* also received permission in this *silsilah* 'Alīyyah from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* through Hadrat Shāh Raḥam 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* as follows:

1. Makhdūm al-'Ālam [Imām Rabbānī] *rahimahullāh*.



2. A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh *rahimahullāh*.



3. Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*.



4. Hājī 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Shahīd *rahimahullāh*.



5. Sayyid Raḥam 'Alī Shāh *rahimahullāh*.



6. Sayyid 'Abd ar-Razzāq *rahimahullāh*.



7. Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥayy *rahimahullāh*.



8. Sayyid Muḥammad Ghauth *rahimahullāh*.



9. Sayyid Abū Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*.



10. Shāh Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*.



11. Sayyid Qamīs al-A'zam *rahimahullāh*.



12. Sayyid Ilyās Maghribī *rahimahullāh*.



13. Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Maghribī *rahimahullāh*.



14. Sayyid Maulānā Maghribī *rahimahullāh*.



15. Sayyid Aḥmad Qudsī *rahimahullāh*.



16. Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir Ra'sī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Sayyid 'Abd al-Wahhāb *rahimahullāh*.



18. Sayyid Mūsā *rahimahullāh*.



19. Sayyid Yahyā Zāhid *rahimahullāh*.



20. Sayyid Zayn ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*.



21. Sayyid 'Abd ar-Razzāq *rahimahullāh*.



22. Ghauth ath-Thaqalayn Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī
rahimahullāh.



23. Abū Sa'īd Makhzūmī *rahimahullāh*.



24. Abū al-Hasan Hakkārī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
25. Abū al-Farah Tarsūsī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
26. 'Abd al-Wāhīd Tamīmī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
27. Abū Bakr Shiblī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
28. Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
29. Sarīyy Saqaīyy *rahimahullāh.*
↓
30. Shaykh Ma'rūf Karkhī *rahimahullāh.*
↓
31. Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā Ridā *rahimahullāh.*
↓
32. Imām Mūsā Kāzīm *rahimahullāh.*
↓
33. Imām Ja'far Ṣādiq *rahimahullāh.*
↓
34. Imām Muḥammad Bāqir *rahimahullāh.*
↓
35. Imām Zayn al-'Ābidīn *rahimahullāh.*
↓
36. Imām Ḥusayn Shahīd-e-Karbālā ؑ.
↓
37. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu.*
↓
38. Maḥbūb Rabbil 'Ālamīn Muḥammad Mustafā ؑ.

The 'Alīyyah Naqshbandīyyah Quddūsīyyah Lineage:

Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* enjoyed the *nisbat* of *bay'ah*, companionship and *ijāzah* to A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib through the previously-mentioned links to Quṭb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

14. Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*.



15. Durwesh Muḥammad ibn Qāsim Audhī *rahimahullāh*.



16. Sayyid Badhan Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Sayyid Ajmal Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



18. Shāh 'Abd al-Haqq *rahimahullāh*.



19. Khwājah 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār *rahimahullāh*.



20. Khwājah Maulānā Ya'qūb Charkhī *rahimahullāh*.



21. Khwājah 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Attār *rahimahullāh*.



22. Imām at-Tarīqah · Khwājah Bahā' ad-Dīn Naqshband *rahimahullāh*.



23. Khwājah Sayyid Amīr Kulāl *rahimahullāh*.



24. Khwājah Muḥammad Bābā Sammāsī *rahimahullāh*.



25. Khwājah 'Azīzān 'Alī Rāmītnī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
26. Khwājah Maḥmūd Abū al-Khayr Faghnaẓwī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
27. Khwājah Muḥammad 'Ārif Rewgarī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
28. Khwājah 'Abd al-Khāliq Ghajdawānī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
29. Khwājah Yūsuf Hamdānī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
30. Khwājah Abū 'Alī Fārmadī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
31. Khwājah Imām Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
32. Khwājah Abū 'Alī Daqqāq *rahimahullāh*.
↓
33. Khwājah Abū al-Qāsim Naṣrābādī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
34. Khwājah Abū Bakr Shiblī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
35. Sayyid aṭ-Ṭā'ifah Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
36. Shaykh Sarīyy Saqaṭīyy *rahimahullāh*.
↓
37. Shaykh Ma'rūf Karkhī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
38. Shaykh Dā'ūd Ṭā'ī *rahimahullāh*.
↓
39. Khwājah Ḥabīb 'Ajamī *rahimahullāh*.



40. Imām al-Auliya' Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh*.



41. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



42. Muhammad Mustafā 榮.



Hadrat Imām Rabbānī also had *ijāzah* for this *silsilah 'āliyah* through Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muḥaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

1. Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.



2. A'la Hadrat Hāji Imdādullāh Shāh *rahimahullāh*.



3. Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*.



4. Hadrat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*.



5. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.



6. Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh*.



7. Shāh ‘Abd ar-Rahīm *rahimahullāh*.



8. Sayyid 'Abdullāh *rahimahullāh*.



9. Sayyid Ādam Binnaurī *rahimahullāh*.



10. Imām Rabbānī Shaykh Aḥmad Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*.



11. Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh*.



12. Khwājah Amkangī *rahimahullāh*.



13. Maulānā Durwesh *rahimahullāh*.



14. Maulānā Zāhid *rahimahullāh*.



15. Khwājah ‘Ubaydullāh Aḥrār *rahimahullāh*.



16. Maulānā Ya‘qūb Charkhī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Khwājah ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn ‘Attār *rahimahullāh*.



18. Imām at-Tarīqah Khwājah Bahā’ ad-Dīn Naqshband *rahimahullāh*, leading up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This *silsilah* is known as Naqshbandīyyah Mujaddidīyyah Walīyallāhīyyah.

The detailed branches of *nisbat*, companionship and *ijāzah* of Shāh ‘Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib, the father of Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh*, are quoted in *Qaul-e-Jamīl*. Please refer to it. All those branches and lineages, exactly as they are, can be regarded as the lineages and chains of Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī *rahimahullāh*. For the sake of brevity they are not quoted here.

Khwājah Abū ‘Alī Fārmadī (30) enjoyed *nisbat-e-uwaysīyyat* with Abū al-Ḥasan Kharqānī (31) while he received spiritual blessings

from Bāyazīd Bustāmī (32). He, in turn, received spiritual training from Imām Ja'far Sādiq (33), Imām Ja'far Sādiq, from his maternal-grandfather, Qāsim (34) ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr as-Siddīq ؑ. Qāsim enjoyed affinity with Hadrat Salmān Fārisī ؑ (35) and he with Hadrat Siddīq Akbar Abū Bakr ibn Abī Quhāfah ؑ (36) and he with Muḥammad Mustafā ؑ.

This *nisbat-e-uwaysīyyat* is known as Siddīqīyyah Naqshbandīyyah Nizāmīyyah Quddūsīyyah.



Hadrat Imām Rabbānī also recieved *ijāzah* for this *silsilah 'alīyyah* from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* as follows:

1. Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.



2. A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.



3. Hadrat Maulānā Naṣīr ad-Dīn Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.



4. Shāh Muḥammad Āfāq Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.



5. Khwājah Diyā' Allāh *rahimahullāh*.



6. Khwājah Muḥammad Zubayr *rahimahullāh*.



7. Khwājah Hujjatullāh Muḥammad Naqshband Thānī *rahimahullāh*.



8. Khwājah Muḥammad Ma'sūm *rahimahullāh*.



9. Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī *rahimahullāh*, leading up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This *silsilah* is known as Naqshbandīyyah Mujaddidīyyah Naṣrīyyah.



Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh* (9) received *ijāzah* and *bay'ah* from all the Chishtīyyah Qādirīyyah Suhrawardīyyah Kubrawīyyah Madārīyyah and Qalandarīyyah chains from his *pīr wa murshid* (spiritual mentor), Shaykh 'Abd al-Aḥad, from his Shaykh, Rukn ad-Dīn Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and from his Shaykh and father, Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Thus, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's *silsilah-e-nisbat* through all these chains, leading up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, will be the shortest.

The 'Alīyyah Suhrawardīyyah Quddūsīyyah Lineage:

Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* enjoyed the *nisbat* of *bay'ah*, companionship and *ijāzah* from A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib through the previously-mentioned links to Quṭb al-'Ālam 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

14. Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.



15. Durwesh Muḥammad ibn Qāsim *rahimahullāh*.



16. Sayyid Badhan Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



17. Sayyid Ajmal Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh*.



18. Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*.



19. Shaykh Rukn ad-Dīn Abū al-Fath *rahimahullāh*.



20. From his father, Shaykh Sadr ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*.



21. From his father, Shaykh Bahā' ad-Dīn Zakarīyyā Multānī *rahimahullāh*.



22. Imām at-Tarīqah Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī *rahimahullāh*.



23. Shaykh Diyā' ad-Dīn Abū an-Najīb Suhrawardī *rahimahullāh*.



24. Shaykh Wajīh ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Qāhir Suhrawardī *rahimahullāh*.



25. Shaykh Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh *rahimahullāh*.



26. Shaykh Aḥmad Dīnaurī *rahimahullāh*.



27. Shaykh Mamshād 'Ulū Dīnaurī *rahimahullāh*.



28. Hadrat Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*.



29. Ma'rūf Karkhī *rahimahullāh*.



30. Shaykh Dā'ūd Tā'ī *rahimahullāh*.



31. Khwājah Habīb 'Ajamī *rahimahullāh*.



32. Imām al-Auliya' Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh*.



33. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



34. Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ.



Sayyid Ajmal Bahrā'ichī *rahimahullāh* enjoyed direct *ijāzah* and *nisbat* in the *Tarīqah* Madārīyyah Qalandarīyyah from Imām at-Tarīqah Shaykh Badī' ad-Dīn Shāh Madār *rahimahullāh*. Shāh Madār's *silsilah* is as follows:

18. Shāh Badī' ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*.



19. Shāh Tayfūr Shāmī *rahimahullāh*.



20. Shāh 'Ayn ad-Dīn Shāmī *rahimahullāh*.



21. Shāh Yamīn ad-Dīn Shāmī *rahimahullāh*.



22. Hadrat Badrullāh 'Alam Bardār *rahimahullāh*.



23. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



24. Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This *silsilah* is known as Madārīyyah Qalandarīyyah Quddūsīyyah Imdādīyyah Rashīdīyyah.



Shaykh Jalāl ad-Dīn Bukhārī received *ijāzah* of the Kubrawīyyah *silsilah* from Shaykh Hamīd ad-Dīn Samarqandī as follows:

19. Shaykh Hamīd ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh*.



20. Shaykh Shams ad-Dīn ibn Abī Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh*.



21. Shaykh 'Atāyā' Khālīdī *rahimahullāh*.



22. Shaykh Aḥmad Bābā Kamāl Khaḥbandī *rahimahullāh*.



23. Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn Kubrā *rahimahullāh*.



24. 'Ammār Yāsir *rahimahullāh*.



25. Abū an-Najīb Suhrawardī *rahimahullāh*.



26. Shaykh Aḥmad Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*.



27. Abū Bakr Nassāj *rahimahullāh*.



28. Abū al-Qāsim Kargānī *rahimahullāh*.



29. Khwājah Abū 'Uthmān Maghribī *rahimahullāh*.



30. Abū 'Alī Kātīb *rahimahullāh*.



31. Shaykh 'Alī Raudbārī *rahimahullāh*.



32. Sayyid at-Tā'ifah Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*.



33. Ma'rūf Karkhī *rahimahullāh*.



34. Shaykh Dā'ūd Tā'ī *rahimahullāh*.



35. Khwājah Habīb 'Ajamī *rahimahullāh*.



36. Imām al-Auliya' Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh*.



37. Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu*.



38. Aḥmad Muḥtabā Muḥammad Mustafā ❸ — salutations to him, his family, his Companions and all those who love them, *through Your Mercy, O the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.*



The above are the well-known chains of *nisbat* and *ijāzah* through which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was linked. They all stem from only one source, but due to the manifold blessings which they shared and the transference thereof, from one to the other, the branches are numerous and it is very difficult to encompass them all. That is why we did not delve into all of them. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's spiritual training and blessings were by and large attached to Quṭb al-'Ālam Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Apart from the *nisbat-e-inwaysīyyat* and the spiritual bestowal which Hadrat enjoyed with him, the strong bond he shared with him was also due to Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs's presence in all four *silsilahs*. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's associates [and *murīds*] received their

allotted share of blessings from all these lineages, but there was an additional bestowal from the Chishtīyyah lineage. This is why the Chishtīyyah tree (*shajarah*) is more commonly printed and circulated. Many of his associates possess this *shajarah*. Although we can say that all four branches, and their subsidiary branches, have been encompassed in these chains by virtue of the presence of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* [in all of them], these chains collectively lead up to Imām at-Tarīqah Hadrat Mu‘īn ad-Dīn Ajmerī *rahimahullāh*. The bestowal is therefore outwardly attributed to the Chishtīyyah lineage.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī only composed poetry on one occasion. Even then, he composed the *shajarah* which is generally used as a *tawassul* (means) by his associates in their *du‘ā’s*. I thus conclude this chapter and present it to the reader *tabarrukan* (as a source of blessings):

بهر امداد و بنور حضرت عبد الرحيم - عبد باري عبد هادي عضد دين مكّي ولي
هم محمدي و محبّ الله و شاه بو سعيد - هم نظام الدين جلال و عبد قدوس احمدي
هم محمد عارف و هم عبد حق شيخ جلال - هم شمس دين ترك و علاؤ الدين فريد جودهني
قطب دين و هم معين الدين و عثمان و شريف - هم بمودود و ابو يوسف محمد و احمدي
بو سحاق و هم بممشاد و هبيرة نامور - هم حذيفه ابن ادهم هم فضيل مرشدي
عبد واحد هم حسن بصري علي فخر دين - سيد الكونين فخر العالمين بشري نبي
باك كن قلب مرا تو از خيال غير خويش - بهر ذات خود شفايم دهر امراض دلي

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī’s associates requested that his name should be included on the same scale as the above poem. Two couplets were written by Janāb Qārī Mughīth ad-Dīn Sāhib Sādhaurī. These are quoted in the footnotes for the benefit of the associates of the Gangohī court.²⁵

²⁵ يا الهي كن مناجاتم بفضل خود قبول - هم ز صدفه اولياء خاندان صابري

از برای زيب عالم مفخر عرب و عجم - شاه رشيد احمد رشيد باصفا و سيدي

I [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] have added one more line for the associates of Hadrat

Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib:

بهر مولانا خليل احمد ملاذي في غدي - هم رشيد احمد رشيد باصفا و سيدي

With absolute humility and submission, I now make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to include this worthless author [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] and all the readers of this biography amongst this lofty group and blessed party [mentioned in all the lineages] and to engulf us with their blessings and bestowals. We beseech Allāh ﷻ to bless us with His True Love, to keep us firm and steadfast in our affiliation [with this group of pious personalities], and to resurrect us on the Plain of Resurrection amongst them. Āmīn.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTING AND TUTORING MURĪDS

*Look, the Auliya' of Allāh are the Isrāfīl of the time ...
Life remains because of him, death occurs because of him
[when his trumpet is blown].*

*If you are hard like a rock or marble,
[then] come to the Shaykh and become like a jewel.*

*The work of the Shaykh is to illuminate and create heat,
[but] the work of proud people are excuses and shamelessness.*

*The words of the Shaykh create love and tranquillity,
[while] the words of worldly people create unease and division.*

*The Shaykh is your guide to this path.
His words are the embodiment of Nūr (guidance).*

Just as Allāh ﷻ had blessed Hadrat Imām Rabbānī with the prudence and sound judgement of a *mujtahid* with regard to external knowledge ('ilm *zāhirī*), the same can be said about his spiritual knowledge ('ilm *bāṭinī*). In other words, the effects of his Allāh-endowed understanding, insight, intelligence and proficiency

were equally displayed in the sciences of both the Sharī'ah and the Tarīqah.

This worthless compiler [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] is totally unqualified and uninitiated in this field, and I am therefore hesitant to write any further. However, I present – as a prelude – the gist of what I have understood from the statements which I had heard from my pious elders, and that which I have read in the writings of Allāh’s special servants.

The word *nisbat* in the Arabic language refers to two things – one being *irtibāṭ* (connection, affiliation). The creation has an unending connection with its Creator. Based upon this unending connection, we can say that the number of connections with Allāh ﷻ is equal to the number of Allāh’s ﷻ Names and Attributes. For example, there is a connection of *khalq* (creation) between the *Khāliq* (Creator) and the *makhlūq* (created). There is a connection of *rizq* (sustenance) between the *Rāziq* (Sustainer) and the *marzūq* (sustained). There is a connection of *rahmah* (Mercy) between the *Rahīm* (Merciful) and the *marhūm* (the one upon whom Mercy is bestowed). Thus, we can say that there exists no one who is devoid of *nisbat*. How can anyone be devoid of it when such a void is impossible?

Every human is in possession of a ‘basic knowledge’ of this *nisbat*. If this were not the case, there would have been no *īmān* at all. Even the most ordinary Muslim knows and perceives Allāh ﷻ as his Creator, Sustainer, and as an All-Merciful Being. In fact, this connection is even enjoyed by an disbeliever (*kāfir*) to a certain extent, because this is an essential ingredient of *fiṭrah* (the fundamental manner in which man was created). Nevertheless, such a fundamental knowledge is considered insufficient in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ, and they [the disbelievers] are therefore referred to as *kuffār* and destined for eternal punishment.

In short, this *rabṭ* [link] and *nisbat*, which is established between Allāh ﷻ and His servants, is the same *nisbat* which is commonly known in Sufi circles. The acquisition of this *nisbat* demands that it should become firmly embedded in the heart – to such an extent that it influences the person – and this superficial knowledge which the person possessed, should be transformed into 'ilm al-yaqīn (absolute knowledge) and reach the level of *hudūr* (experiencing the Presence of Allāh ﷻ). When a servant acquires this through the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, such a *sālik* (the one treading this path) is known as a *sāhib-e-nisbat* in the terminology of the *Ahlullāh*. Although the ways and means of acquiring it are *ikhtiyārī* (within one's choice), its actual acquisition is *wahbī* (bestowed by Allāh ﷻ):

يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"Allāh leads astray whomever He Wills
and guides whomever He Wills."

Allāh ﷻ has endowed man with different temperaments. Since man's temperament is an innate quality, he does not have the choice to change it. Thus, even when he develops the correct *nisbat*, his temperament will remain the same as it was prior to developing *nisbat*. However, its effects and demands will change. For example, if a person was strict and stern by nature, this quality will remain within him, even after becoming a *sāhib-e-nisbat*. However, previously he was strict and stern towards the sinners and *ahl-e-bāṭil*. Likewise, if he was heedless by nature, and thus heedless of good deeds and concern for the Hereafter, he will now be focused on one thing [the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ], and he will pay no attention (remain heedless) to this world and will remain independent of the creation. The same can be applied to every quality of the temperament. Rasūlullāh ﷺ expressed this topic in the following way:

أَشَدُّهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ أَشَدُّهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

*"Those who were the severest in jāhiliyyah
shall be the severest in Islam."*

The effect of correct *nisbat* is displayed in a change in one's character and habits. Evil qualities disappear and good habits develop. All evil traits are replaced with good traits. The only true change which takes place in one's temperament and natural habits is that they become focused and utilised in good causes. Since temperaments are diverse, this has resulted in numerous and diverse *nisbats*. It is this very diversity in *nisbat* which has caused many wayward and short-sighted people to be deprived of it. They wrongfully confused this diversity with disunity, and consequently behaved in a disrespectful and audacious manner towards some group or the other. In so doing, they lost sight of the objective and were deprived of *īmān* itself. May Allāh ﷻ protect us from this.

Man is able to understand a concept easily when examples are presented to him. We can understand the above as follows: The light of *ma'rifat* in the heart of a *sālik* is like a lamp. If a lamp is lit in a dark place, a person – who is engaged in a task in that place – will obviously perform his task in the light provided by the lamp, even though he may not be conscious of its light. In fact, right up until the time when he completes his task, it may not even cross his mind that he is seated in its light.

In like manner, a person who is *sāhib-e-nisbat* has the lamp of guidance in his heart. Everything he does is *ḥaqq* and thus worthy of reward – even if he did not pay attention to this at the time of performing the action, and even if it never crossed his mind that this action had been executed after it had derived light and guidance from his heart. Based upon this, the actions of the *Ahlullāh* – which is a product of their temperaments – sometimes appear to be unacceptable. However, these actions are in actual fact not

punishable, and they will not be taken to task for having committed them. This is because the impetus which prompted them to perform the action – and is thus its cause – has already become acceptable (*mustahsan*) and acknowledged as praiseworthy. This is known as *ghalabah-e-hāl*, and a *maghlūb al-hāl* (one who is overcome by his condition) is both rationally and socially excused. It is quite another matter altogether – and certainly not permissible, neither rationally nor socially – for a non-excused person to emulate an excused person.

When a student completes all the prescribed books under his teacher's tutelage and the teacher gives him a certificate – considering him to be duly qualified – it is as though he is giving him permission to convey to others whatever knowledge he had acquired from him, and to adopt whichever methodologies he considers appropriate in order to convey this knowledge to others.

Similarly, when a *sāhib-e-nisbat* becomes *mujāz-e-Tarīqah* of his Shaykh, it is as though the Shaykh is permitting him to convey to other desirous Muslims the *nisbat* which he had acquired in any manner which he may consider appropriate. When his practical life commences after obtaining this permission from his Shaykh, his natural proficiency, intellect, innate intelligence and insight will all wield its influence over the ways and methods of instruction which he chooses to adopt. Each *murshid* (spiritual guide) will guide and instruct his *murīds* according to his own understanding and capability of bestowal, and thereby he will enable others to acquire *nisbat* and Allāh-consciousness. It is possible for a *murīd* to surpass his Shaykh in his ability to diagnose the illnesses of others. This diagnosis is the most important pillar upon which the guidance and instruction of others is based. It is also quite possible that the *murīd* may prove to be more effective than his Shaykh in training his own *murīds* and conveying them towards guidance and success.

Everyone knows that it is the purpose of war to gain victory over

the enemy. Thus, depending on the time and circumstances, the most appropriate manoeuvres will be adopted. Arrows and spears may suffice for the realization of this objective during a certain era, whereas canons and guns may be needed during another era. It is also possible for two commanders to adopt two different approaches in order to realize their objective. A recently-graduated commander may adopt a manoeuvre which is different from an elderly, experienced commander. However, this difference [in their approach] would not be considered as rebellion or revolt.

The methodologies of teaching the rules and injunctions of the Sharī'ah and *Tarīqah*, as was adopted by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, were modified to suit our conditions and temperaments in this era. In those times, teaching rules and regulations whilst walking, sitting etc., informing them about the essentials of *Dīn*, or merely asking his Companions to remain in his company was sufficient to convey them to the highest level of acquiring the objectives of both [Sharī'ah and *Tarīqah*]. However, after Rasūlullāh ﷺ departed from this world, his true deputies and *khulafā'* – who were enlightened by his lamp – adopted additional methodologies for the acquisition of these same objectives. They introduced *madāris*, studying of text books for the purpose of learning the Sharī'ah, and utilized *dhikr*, *shughl* and *murāqabah* for the purpose of learning the *tarīqah*. This division [between studying the Sharī'ah and the *Tarīqah*] cannot be called *bid'ah*, neither can it be included within the ambit of deviation.

Similarly, in their efforts to spread and acquire their specific objective, the *Ahlullāh* of every era have given open permission to their deputies to adopt whichever methodologies they consider appropriate. They were free to adopt what they had learnt from their *mashā'ikh*, or to use any other methodology to attain the same goal. Diversity and improvement in methodologies, while having the same objective, can never be disapproved of – nor can the Shaykh, or *mashā'ikh*, be blamed for it. We have therefore witnessed this

diversity among the *Ahlullāh* since the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ up until today, and this diversity will remain until the Resurrection.

A *sāhib-e-nisbat* Shaykh and *'ārif billāh murshid* treats spiritual maladies. He is a physician who rectifies the imbalances of the heart. A doctor who treats physical illnesses needs to resort to his proficiency, understanding and intellect when diagnosing an illness. He has to consider the temperament of his patient, prescribe medication, and prescribe a method of rectification. In the same way – in fact, to an even greater extent – a spiritual doctor has to resort to his intelligence when rectifying the internal condition of the seekers (*ṭālibīn*). It is possible – and it most definitely happens – that a student surpasses his teacher in achieving the objective of treatment, namely good health and cure from illness. In like manner, it is also possible for a *sāhib-e-nisbat murīd* to surpass his Shaykh in treating and guiding others. The instruction of Allāh ﷻ has to be realized:

وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ

*"Above every knowledgeable person
there is one more knowledgeable."*

(Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 76)

Bearing in mind that which was said above, it should be clear that in mentioning the actions, practices, methodologies and treatments of a particular Shaykh, it is in no way our intention to belittle, defame or condemn any other personality, nor do we mention this out of disrespect towards others. Allāh Forbid! Some people have expressed a few misgivings and objections to some of the topics which were discussed in volume one. This is why I felt it necessary to mention the above as a prelude to the subject of spiritual training and tutorship.

Any person who has the slightest affiliation with this science will

understand that there is a difference in temperament amongst the *Ahlullāh*, diversity in their *nisbat*, a natural difference in their proficiency and intelligence, and a variation in their services and ranks. This is one thing. It is quite another matter to actually acquire *nisbat* or *wilāyat*, and perfection in knowledge. If, in the biography of a *Qutb al-irshād* of the fourteenth century, we write that Allāh ﷻ had appointed him as the central axis for the creation, and that He had bestowed upon him such blessing and cure in his instruction that people, who could not benefit from the company of other *Ahlullāh*, could come to him and fulfil their objective – then only a person who has no affiliation with this noble science, or possess very little knowledge of this science, will have the audacity to accuse us of being disrespectful and insolent towards other contemporary *Ahlullāh*.

There is no doubt that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was the leader and chief of the *Ahl-e-Sharī'ah wa Tarīqah* in his era and that he was the imām of both noble branches. In his era, he was granted the lofty position of a *mujtahid* in the sciences of the Sharī'ah, and this made him a reference [and an encyclopaedia] to the '*ulamā*'. In the same way, his lofty position and knowledge of the *tarīqah* had made him the *murabbī* (spiritual guide) and chief amongst the *auliyā*' of his time. The nature of his *nisbat* was extremely subtle and thus it was difficult for people to perceive it.

His prophetic-deputyship, as well as the level of his instruction and guidance, clearly displayed his absolute submission and the way he surrendered to Allāh ﷻ in totality. Consequently, in his obedience to the Order of Allāh ﷻ, he would not hesitate to accept the *bay'ah* of any true seeker (*talīb*). At the same time, his natural self-respect and the subtlety of his *nisbat* made it impossible for him to accept the *bay'ah* of any *murīd* who has not become the embodiment of *talab* (quest), and who does not become restless in his quest after considering it to be the most beloved thing of all. He realised that such a person would never be able to achieve his objective. We will

probably not find a single incident in his blessed life where he had instructed someone to do something without the person first requesting it. He was so sensitive in this regard that he disliked the intercession of anyone with regard to instruction and education.

On one occasion, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib and his son-in-law, Muḥammad Yāmīn, presented themselves before Imām Rabbānī. His son-in-law had asked him to speak to Imām Rabbānī on his behalf and to ask him to accept his *bay'ah*. The moment Hadrat Maulānā received the opportunity, he said to Hadrat: "Muḥammad Yāmīn would like to be initiated into the *silsilah*." Hadrat replied with a subtle note of displeasure saying: "You must have deluded him and brought him yourself." Maulānā mustered some courage and said: "Hadrat, I am so sensitive regarding this issue that I cannot ever suggest to anyone to refer to you. I consider my Shaykh to be the sun. A person may come and present himself to Hadrat a million times, or he can wander about wherever he likes – it is irrelevant to me. As far as tempting someone into approaching my Shaykh, or convincing him to pledge *bay'ah* at my Shaykh's hands – I am intensely averse to that."

Hadrat Maulānā [Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib] used to relate to us that, while he was saying this to Hadrat, he could see the effects of joy on his face. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was not pleased by this statement solely because it conformed to his own subtle *nisbat* and sensitive temperament, but also because he found the temperament of his spiritual son [Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib] to be in line with his own temperament, and he was hearing with his own ears the continuation of his *nisbat* – even after his own demise.

وَلَيْكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ
which He bestows on whomever He Wills."

Hadrat's sensitive nature can be gauged from the numerous incidents which were quoted previously and which will be quoted in the forthcoming pages. The temperament of some other Sufis differed vastly from this. In their desire to have a large following, they considered it meritorious to direct others towards their own Shaykh. This trait was never found in Hadrat. The slightest disinterest of a seeker pained him. He would say: "If someone comes to ask, we will show him, but it is not something which can merely be stuck on a person." Since this is a natural matter, both parties are rewarded for their intentions. One thing is certain – the effect of this 'natural matter' was that it had a good effect on Hadrat's associates, and the benefit of it increased day by day.

The natural temperament and nature of Hadrat's *nisbat* demanded that he should have a very small group of associates and that those who actually achieved their objective would be an even smaller group. However, it is solely due to Allāh's Grace and Hadrat's *karāmat* that his associates, and those who have reached their objective, number not only in the thousands, but hundreds of thousands today. This can only be attributed to Allāh-bestowed blessings and Allāh-bestowed cure. The means warranted a certain result, but the result was totally different [and beyond expectation].

After accepting *bay'ah* from a person, Hadrat would generally instruct him to read the following a hundred times each – both after the *fajr* and *maghrib salāh*:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Together with this, he should read 100 times *istighfār* whenever he has the opportunity, but it would be best to recite it when he completes all his tasks and retires to bed after '*ishā salāh*'. He did not stipulate any specific form of *istighfār*. He would instruct some of his associates to say it at least ten times before retiring to bed. He would also say: "It would also suffice you to merely say: 'O Allāh!

I repent.” In short, the person could make *istighfār* and repent in any way. However, Hadrat was most inclined towards the *sayyid al-istighfār* (the main method of seeking forgiveness) because this has been mentioned in the Hadīth:

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

He would also instruct his associates to read *durūd sharīf* at least three hundred times daily. If they were unable to read this amount, they should not read it less than a hundred times. He used to say: “Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ favours upon us are very great. It would be extremely discourteous if we were to be niggardly in sending *durūd* to him.” Hadrat preferred the *durūd* [*durūd Ibrāhīm*] which is read during *salāh*, followed by those which are mentioned in the Ahādīth. He disliked the *durūds* which were written by others e.g. *durūd-e-tāj*, *durūd-e-lukhkhī* etc. In fact, he considered some of them to be impermissible according to the *Sharī’ah* because of the incorrect meanings which some of the words conveyed.

He instructed almost all his *murīds* to read the above-mentioned *aurād* (plural of *wird*, recitation, reading, etc.). Since the occupations of his associates differed, he would increase or decrease the number of repetitions according to their personal circumstances. In fact, he would even permit some people to read whenever possible and as much as possible. However, he paid particular attention to two points: (1) Even if he prescribed a small quantity, the person should adhere to reading it steadfastly. On numerous occasions he said: “The little which one can fulfil steadfastly is better than the large number which he fulfils irregularly.” (2) The time which is set aside for a particular practice should be adhered to strictly. The wisdom behind this is that one develops a habit of adhering to a time-table for one’s *ma’mūlāt* (practices) and thus it is practiced regularly. On the other hand, if no specific time is set aside for one’s *ma’mūlāt*, one would forget to carry them out in most cases and would not adhere to them.

Just as he confined himself to certain *du'ā's* at certain times, he liked his associates to do the same. From time to time he would teach these *du'ā's* to them. For example, he would teach them to read the following *du'ā'* upon entering the Musjid:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

"O Allāh!

Forgive me and open the doors of Your Mercy to me."

Upon leaving the Musjid:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ

"O Allāh!

Forgive me and open the doors of Your Grace to me."

When going to relieve oneself:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ

"O Allāh!

I seek refuge in You from the male and female devils."

Upon leaving the toilet:

غُفْرَانُكَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنِّي الْأَدَى وَعَافَانِي

"O Allāh! I seek Your Forgiveness. All praise is due to Allāh who has removed discomfort from me and has given me relief."

Upon seeing a sick person suffering:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي مِمَّا ابْتَلَاكَ بِهِ وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ تَفْضِيْلًا

"All praise is due to Allāh for having safeguarded me from the suffering which He Caused you and for having favoured me over many of His Creations."

When going to sleep, the person should lie on his right side, recite *āyatul kursī*, *mu'awwadhatayn* (Sūrahs al-Falaq and an-Nās), the last verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah, and then say the following:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ اُمُوْتُ وَاَحْيٰى

"O Allāh! In Your Name do I live and die."

Upon waking up in the morning:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي اَحْيَاَنَا بَعْدَ مَا اَمَاتَنَا وَاِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ

"All praise is due to Allāh Who gave us life after having caused us to die and to Him is our final resurrection."

In short, Hadrat adhered strictly to reading the specific *du'ā's* on specific occasions and made a point of teaching these to his associates.

If the seeker wanted to make further progress and desired advancing in *sulūk*, he would instruct him into *dhikr wa shughl* and provide him with full guidance in this regard. He did not confine himself to any specific method of *dhikr*. He would gauge the seeker's temperament and instruct him accordingly. He would ask him to practise on the methods which were most conducive and most beneficial to him.

He would instruct some of them according to the Chishtīyyah approach, others according to the Naqshbandīyyah approach and, at times, he would combine both approaches and instruct the person in a merged approach.

His expertise was not confined to anything specific. His proficiency, intellect, insight and Allāh-endowed capability did not permit him to err in gauging a person's temperament. There are numerous incidents where Hadrat had, for example, prescribed the Chishtīyyah approach to a person. During the course of his training, the person then happened to go to another *Ahlullāh* who either affirmed the first approach which Hadrat had prescribed, or redirected the person to another approach. When he then realised that the second approach was unhelpful, he reverted the person back to the Chishtīyyah approach. The *Ahlullāh* would then say to the person: "Only the instruction which Hadrat Maulānā had given you will be of benefit to you."

From amongst the numerous methods of achieving a single objective, Hadrat's method of training was so safe and secure that all fear of 'highway robbery' had become weakened. One never found difficult toiling, spending several 'forty days' at a time, spiritual exercises, excessive *nafl salāh* and other optional acts of worship in his system of tutoring. It was, in truth, his lofty gaze and the attention which he paid to the *sālik* that directed him towards Allāh ﷻ. From amongst the numerous methods of achieving this goal, he preferred the following method: All associations with anything 'non-Allāh' (all things apart from Allāh) should be overpowered through the excessive *dhikr* of Allāh – to such an extent, that they must be totally subdued – as though they have no relationship and association whatsoever with Him.

He would instruct the *sālik* to engage in the twelve *tasbīhs* [*Bāra tasbīh*]. He was so particular in this regard that, if the person did not complete them at night, he would have to complete them during

the day and, if for some reason he did not complete them in one day, he had to make up for them (make *qadā*) the following day. If he was unable to do it aloud, he had to do so silently. If he could not do it while seated, he would be allowed to complete it while lying down. If he was unable to maintain his *wudū'*, he had to continue without *wudū'*. In short – no matter what – he should not omit these under any circumstances. Once the *sālik* had developed an enthusiasm for *dhikrullāh*, he would increase the number of *ism-e-dhāt* (*Allāhu Allāh*) or *nafiy ithbāt* (*Lā ilāha illallāh*). He would increase the number from 1000 until he eventually read up to 12 000 and even 24 000. Together with this, he would teach him *pās anfās* and explain to him the manner of controlling his breath through *dhikrullāh*.

Instead of *pās anfās*, he would teach some *sāliks* the method of *dhikr-e-qalbī* (*dhikr* with the heart). Since this method of *dhikr* is not limited, he would instruct the *sālik* to engage in it without specifying any number. He had to engage in it all the time with special concentration. The feeling and condition which one would experience – both internally and externally – within a few days of practising upon this instruction is neither within our ability to describe, nor is there any need to express it.

This was the beginning of the bond of love with Allāh ﷻ for which thousands of His servants were prepared to cast aside the kingdoms and treasures of this world. It was the prelude to the joy of that righteous obedience for which thousands of people were prepared to desert their inhabited bodies [annihilation of self] and which they considered to be the pinnacle of their achievements.

Allāh ﷻ says:

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا تَخَلَّوْا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً

“When kings invade a town,

they ruin it and they turn its noble people into the most abject.”
(Sūrah an-Naml, 27: 34)

Once Hadrat perceived the effect of *pās anfās* or *dhikr-e-qalbī* on the *sālik*, he would initiate him into *murāqabah hudūri wa ma'īyyat* (meditating on Allāh's Presence and Proximity), or any other practice which he considered to be beneficial for the *sālik*. The effects and the results of this short instruction and education are only known to those who have experienced it. However, their mouths are sealed, for what is the need for them to describe it? One thing is certain – together with an increase in their acts of obedience, their affinity [with Allāh ﷻ] increased, and an aversion towards sinning increased by the day. Shame and modesty would develop in the *sālik* and he would hesitate in disobeying Allāh ﷻ – in privacy and in public. It was as though a guard had been placed at the entrance of his heart who prevented anything, apart from Allāh ﷻ, from entering it.

The effects of *dhikr* would flow through him and it would permeate not only his heart and mind, but every part of his body. These effects are beyond description. Evil habits and traits would gradually and automatically become weaker, while good qualities and traits would become stronger until eventually it would become firmly embedded in the person's character. The heart would experience a restlessness – as though it was in search of something. It would have an expectation of finding something which is beyond comprehension. It would eventually find this light which is known as *nisbat* and experience *hudūri* (the constant Presence of Allāh ﷻ).

There is no doubt that, due to the differences in the temperaments of his associates, each one responded differently to Hadrat's teachings. One would tread a particular path, while another would tread a different path. One would experience a certain condition, while the other would experience a different condition. This is what really marked Hadrat's proficiency. He was able to control all of

them according to their different temperaments and was able to convey each one to the level of perfection in accordance with their peculiar habits and mannerisms. Amongst his associates, many had extraordinary experiences – each in his own unique way. Such experiences are rarely absent in the heart of a *sālik*. He would guide each *sālik* according to his peculiar inclinations, temperament, perception and understanding, convey him to the next level and send him forward.

Allāh Allah apportioned diverse conditions and peculiarities to His Creation. Some trees need the full rays of the sun to grow and flourish. The absence of sunlight is detrimental to them. Yet, the lushness and greenery of a shade-loving tree is dependent upon shade and on being kept away from the sunlight. If it is placed in the full sun, it will wither and die. Extraordinary experiences of the heart desire concealment and secrecy. It [such experiences] does not like to be expressed verbally and brought into the open. That is why I cannot describe the condition of any person who went through such experiences. It is my duty to convey the narratives and accounts of my fellow friends in this biography. However, I did not receive anything on this subject nor did others convey them to me. If I did overhear some accounts, I did not receive permission to relate them. This section is therefore devoid of strange stories, unique experiences, rare results, and unseen spiritual bestowals. However, in conclusion it is necessary for me to say that the hearts of those who were tutored by Hadrat most certainly experienced unique and extraordinary occurrences.

Many had good dreams and experienced glad tidings through such dreams. They experienced the blessings and bestowals of the elders of the *silsilahs* and the guides of the spiritual lineages. At times they would be overcome with zeal and enthusiasm. At other times, a state of 'intoxication' and amazement would overpower them. Some of them would burst out into fits of laughter, while others would be overcome by weeping and would cry so profusely that

they literally had no time to do anything except wiping the tears from their cheeks and beards.

There was a time when Hadrat had fallen ill and the doctor's prescription was that he should eat the meat of pigeons. One of his *khādims* took this responsibility upon himself. He was in the habit of laughing constantly. Wherever he went, he would be overcome with laughter. Whenever he appeared before Hadrat, he would seal his mouth with a cloth in an attempt to suppress his laughter. Even then, some sound would still escape him. On one occasion he went out into the veld to catch a pigeon. He saw a cave, and told his companion that he was convinced that he would find a pigeon inside. He approached it – laughing – and extended his hand inside. A black snake came out of the cave – hissing. His companion was overcome with fear and moved aside, but this *khādim* stood his ground and continued laughing. He moved his hands about two or three times, caught two pigeons and returned – still laughing. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī recovered from his illness and heard about his story, he made *du'ā'* for him and said: "Bhāi! Whatever a person does, he does to his own advantage."

There was another person who would cry continuously. He would cry and scream like a mad-man. He would quote poems of love and cry incessantly. It was as though a terrible calamity had struck him and he was in such excruciating pain that he could not suppress it and it was impossible for him to exercise any patience. He would constantly repeat this poem:

*Everyone's Book of Deeds
will be read on the Day of Judgement,
while I will become unconscious
and will not be able to hear it.*

If anyone had such a quest [for Allāh ﷻ], he would consider it the realization of his dreams, and if he were to die in this state, he

would consider it the pinnacle of life.

*Come and see Him,
and raise your heart away from this world.
When you meet the Friend,
you will sever all relations with this world.*

*If I do not receive anything
from the Garden of Love ...
Then too, the anticipation of meeting Him
pleases me [is enough for me].*

If there was anything which he uttered during the brightness of the day or the silent hours of the night, then it was this:

*If the lover did not have
a deep-rooted love for his Beloved,
then he would not be toiling
and roaming in the heat of the mid-day sun.*

There were also those who used to lose themselves in remorse and regret, and annihilate themselves in their desire to meet their Beloved [Allāh ﷻ]. They had realized their objective, yet they considered themselves to have failed in this regard. Thus they would tremble and say:

*O lush, green tree!
How long will I keep looking at you?
In regret I gaze at your green colour,
but when will you bear fruit?*

How does one describe a person's internal condition? Some were overwhelmed by submission. Some were swept away in amazement and reflection, while others were the pinnacle of patience. Some would constantly worry and weep. Some were brimming with love,

while others revealed that they were infused with peace and internal tranquillity. Some glowed with enthusiasm, while others were engrossed in concealment [asceticism]. However, there was something which they all had in common – they were all obedient to the Orders of the Beloved [Allāh ﷻ] and they all had a desire to reach their objective. Regardless of which condition or state had overcome him – each person literally addressed his One Allāh, saying:

*You are the King and I am the slave.
Whatever You wish, You may Command,
and Your Command is compulsory upon the slave to obey.*

There were also those from amongst Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's blessed group who had arrived in this world with a temperament which was similar to his. They remained, unwavering, from beginning to end and was never overcome by any peculiar condition. They never experienced any hindrance, and remained engrossed in a simple and straightforward manner of obedience. They kept themselves occupied in studying or teaching the Sharī'ah. They acquired *nisbat* once their *hudūr* had been established. The sole result of their internal condition was that they remained totally subservient to the injunctions of Allāh ﷻ and His Divine Will, and all their desires became subservient to the Pleasure of their Beloved [Allāh ﷻ].

*O Friend,
if it pleases You not to fulfil my wishes and ambitions,
then I turn my desire into Your Desire.
[I will be pleased with whatever You Decree for me.]*

They started to experience joy in complying with the orders of Allāh ﷻ. The servant experienced a desire to serve his Master [Allāh ﷻ], and his heart demanded:

*Do not think that I will lift my eyes from You, my Beloved!
Till my last breath remains, I will continue loving You.
[And] if I hear that the caravan of my Beloved is in distress,
then the first one honoured to sacrifice his life for You, will be me.*

Some of Hadrat's associates would be overcome by ecstasy (hāl) and go into a trance-like condition. They would lie on the Musjid floor and scream for hours. Then there were also those who would be astounded upon seeing their brothers in such a state, and they would wonder how a person could possibly experience such a condition. In short, each person had his own peculiar trait and mannerism.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would monitor the diverse temperaments and conditions of his associates and impart spiritual training to them – treating each one according to his peculiarities. It was his heart-felt desire that each person should appreciate whatever internal condition he experienced, that he should consider it to be a Favour from Allāh ﷻ, and that he should safeguard it with gratitude.

One person was once overcome by an uncontrollable condition, and he started to boast about it to others. Hardly had he done this, when the condition was removed from his heart. The removal of a Favour is not such that a *sālik's* heart does not perceive its removal, or that he does not feel its effect. He wrote to Hadrat describing his condition. In reply, Hadrat wrote the following:

*The Unseen Subtlety (latā'if) is such a guest,
that, if you become unmindful,
it returns [to Allāh ﷻ].*

At the same time, Hadrat would not allow his associates to pay undue attention to such conditions and experiences. He would say to them: "These conditions are not the objective. The essential objective is obedience to Allāh ﷻ and emulating the Sharī'ah of

Rasūlullāh ﷺ.” Consequently, his associates would not become smug over such conditions and experiences. The more they experienced these conditions, the more they would direct themselves towards their actual objective. They would progress further until they acquired the quality of total emulation of the Sharī’ah with absolute conviction and total enthusiasm, thereby reducing the fear of any attack from Shaytān.

Some of his associates experienced unique conditions at the beginning stages of their training which, in other circles, would be considered extremely enviable. However, in Hadrat’s circle these conditions were not considered so remarkable. He would always advise the person, saying: “Do not pay undue attention to it.”

A person once pledged *bay’ah* to Hadrat through a letter. Afterwards he became engrossed in *dhikr* – as per Hadrat’s instruction. Within a few days he experienced a condition in which he met the souls of the *auliyā’* of the different *silsilahs*. Thereafter he began meeting the souls of the Prophets ﷺ – one after the other. Gradually he felt as if every vein and every hair on his entire body – from head to toe – had a bond with pure souls. During the course of this condition, he would be go into a trance and an altered state of consciousness, during which time the ‘unseen’ would be revealed to him and he would acquire the honour of being present in the assembly of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. At times he would become unconscious and remain motionless. However, the moment it was time for *ṣalāh*, he would regain his consciousness. Upon completing his *fard ṣalāh*, he would fall unconscious again. While in this unconscious state, he would sometimes wake up all of a sudden, ask for *rotī*, take a few bites of whatever was presented to him, eat like a mad-man, spit out the last morsel, and lose consciousness once again. It seemed as though he had been ordered to eat, and ordered to stop eating.

This condition prevailed for several months and Hadrat was

informed about it. Hadrat replied [to the person who wrote on behalf of this *murīd*]: "These things are not the objective. If you intend coming here, bring him with you. Efforts will have to be made to teach him about the Sharī'ah." His father brought him to Gangoh. Hadrat seated him near him and lowered his head. To onlookers, it appeared as if Hadrat's *tawajjuh* (focus) was causing the person to fall into a dream-like state. He lowered his head like a sleeping person and fell to the ground. After a few moments, Hadrat started speaking [to all those who were present] and this person also got up – like every other normal person. He eventually went to Deoband to study and did not ever experience such a condition again. At the same time, he progressed in his yearning for Allāh ﷻ and in his obedience to Him.

While Hadrat used to be occupied with *awwābīn ṣalāh* after *maghrib*, some of his associates would enter a trance-like state. They would become ecstatic, scream out, lie on the ground, sing heart-rending poems, and utter sorrowful words of invocation. Upon completion of his *ṣalāh*, when Hadrat proceeded [to his house], the screaming and beseeching would increase. They would say: "Hadrat, for the Sake of Allāh, show mercy on us. Feel sorry for us." Hadrat would listen to these words with absolute resoluteness, and proceed silently. Since these conditions were not really worthy of consideration, he would not pay any attention to it. At the same time – because of the fact that these were scenes of righteousness and enchantment – he would not look upon it with aversion. Obviously, whatever they were experiencing was due to their quest for the Pure Allāh for whom countless people had sacrificed their lives. Thus, if a person were to pass away in this quest [for Allāh ﷻ], he would, to a certain extent, attain his objective based upon this Hadīth:

ومن يخرج من بيته مهاجرا إلى الله ورسوله فقد وقع أجره على الله

"The one who leaves his house in his quest for Allāh and His

Messenger, has established his reward from Allāh."

Hadrat would therefore consider it a boon if a person had to pass away in such a state. May thousands of lives be sacrificed for a single death of this nature. Such a death is preferred over thousands of survivals.

A *buzurg* once wrote to Hadrat, informing him about one of Hadrat's *murīds* who had become *maghlūb al-hāl* (one who is overcome, one who is in a trance-like condition). He expressed his distress and pleaded with Hadrat to save him from this condition – for the *murīd's* own good. Hadrat was lying down when this letter was read out to him. He listened to it from beginning to end and, in a peculiar tone, he said: "It will be good if he dies in this very state." Hadrat then turned his body the other way and discarded the incident from his mind.

*O intelligent heart! You cannot reach the Court of the King
until you do not make the sorrow of others, your sorrow ...*

*Until you do not place your shoulder to the wheel,
you will never see the Locks of your Beloved.*

Whether a person was restless, agitated or trembling, Hadrat's supervision and monitoring would ensure that – no matter how difficult it would become for the person – his enthusiasm to reach Allāh ﷻ would increase. Even if a person seemed to be travelling in a desolate place without any means and possessions, he would visualize the attainment of his goal and would not lose courage. Instead of stepping back like a coward, he would advance at every moment.

*Were I to have a hundred hearts,
they would all break at every breath.
Due to Your Incomprable Beauty,
my desire continues to increase.*

Since the appearance and experience of conditions such as ecstasy, trance etc. could very well be obstacles from Shaytān, Hadrat would affirm the blessed conditions of his associates, console them, keep up their spirits, and emphasize upon them the need to adhere to the Sharī'ah and to emulate Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Through his writings, his statements, by way of warning, through encouragement, by way of teaching and through his practical examples, he tutored all his associates – especially those who were prone to such conditions. He ensured that they would firmly believe that, regardless of how enjoyable and excellent such a condition might be, it is of no significance whatsoever if it is experienced while casting aside the protection of the Sharī'ah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

O Sa'di (name of poet)!

*It is impossible to tread the path of truth and purity
without complying with, and following,
the Sunnah of Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ*

*[If a person should choose any other path
than the path of the Messenger ﷺ
he will never reach his desired goal and objective.]*

The essence of Hadrat's teachings to a *sālik* during the course of his *sulūk*, was that the true love of Allāh ﷻ should become fully embedded in his heart until it resulted in his adherence to the Sharī'ah under every condition, and until he emulated Rasūlullāh ﷺ at every step. This is the only way of reaching Allāh ﷻ as explained by Allāh ﷻ Himself in the Qur'ān, and conveyed to us by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This was the same way in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ had been taught and it was the same way in which Imām Rabbānī had repeated it to his associates. Thus, we will be totally correct in saying that his way of instruction – based on the fact that he was the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – was for the sake of conveying and propagating the Qur'ānic instruction:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

“Say: If you love Allāh, then follow me,
Allāh will Love you.”

Hadrat was never heedless of rectifying and improving the condition of his associates. His practical life and his mere presence was guidance in itself. Every *khādim* was enthusiastic about emulating him, engrossed in whatever was required of him and filled with courage to safeguard and uphold whatever he had learnt. However, Hadrat did not suffice with this. He would assist them even further through verbal encouragement and spiritual attention.

There was a *Wilāyatī* [pious] person who remained in Hadrat’s service and engaged in constant *dhikr*. Within a short time he experienced a certain condition where Hadrat’s face would appear to be brighter than the full moon to him. This increased his love for his Shaykh and firmly established his enthusiasm and conviction. Whenever he used to meet with the other members of the *khānqāh*, he would ask them: “This is how luminous and bright Hadrat’s face appears to me. Do you also perceive it in the same way?”

Obviously, everyone who lived in the *khānqāh* would not necessarily experience the same condition. When they replied in the negative, Shaytān instilled pride and haughtiness in this person’s heart and he thought that his fellow companions were deprived of the effects of *dhikr* with which he had been blessed. He considered his own efforts to be accepted by Allāh ﷻ and thought he had acquired something great. These evil thoughts resulted in him becoming lazy and lethargic in *dhikr*. One or two days passed in this way. One night, after *’ishā*, he was massaging Hadrat’s feet. A few other *khādims* were also present. He posed the following question to Hadrat: “Hadrat, Allāh ﷻ says:

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

*"All that is in the heavens
and all that is in the earth glorifies Allāh."*

"In the above verse, the word **مَا** (all) is general – it refers to animate and inanimate objects. Does it mean that everything glorifies Allāh ﷻ?" Hadrat replied: "Yes, everything glorifies Allāh ﷻ, even an ant in its hole. Such a condition has been experienced by most *sālikīn* (plural of *sālik*) – they can feel Allāh's *dhikr* emanating from everything. However, man is so feeble-minded that, as soon as he engages in *dhikr* for a few days, he becomes inflated with pride and thinks that he has become somebody special. He experiences a little illumination and thinks he has reached a venerable position. Remember, such thoughts cause a person to be expelled from the Court of Allāh. Allāh ﷻ bestows countless bounties upon us, but we are unable to be grateful for just one bounty. How can it be correct for us to consider ourselves to be accepted in His Court and eligible for some great reward, merely because we have engaged in a small amount of *dhikr*?"

Hadrat then related this story: "There was once a great '*ābid* (ardent worshipper) and *zāhid* (ascetic). He spent his entire life in Allāh's worship, and his worship was done with sincerity, whereas our acts of worship are filled with ostentation. This person lived for a thousand years. His entire long life was spent in Allāh's worship. Towards the end of his life the thought crossed his mind: 'I have engaged in the constant worship of Allāh. I have spent my entire life in His remembrance. I will certainly receive a lofty rank from Him as reward.' When he passed away and he was presented before Allāh ﷻ, the angels were commanded to cast him into Hell. Angels are under the absolute Command of Allāh ﷻ. They dragged him towards Hell. He called out saying: 'O Allāh! I worshipped you for one thousand years, I was actually eligible for Paradise!' Allāh ordered the angels: 'Very well, keep him on the edge of Hell.' He was placed there and he felt extremely thirsty. In his restlessness he beseeched Allāh ﷻ, saying: 'O my Lord! Permit me to drink water

because I am dying of thirst.' Allāh ﷻ said to the angels: 'Tell him that water is not for free over here. He may purchase one bowl of water in exchange for one thousand year's of worship, if not, he should remain silent.' He was delighted upon hearing this and said: 'I accept the offer. If I receive the water, I will save my life. At least I have not been asked for the worship of several thousand years.' Allāh ﷻ said to the angels: 'Tell him, while he lived in the world for a thousand years, he drank thousands of bowls of cool, sweet water. He must first give an account of all of that and then We will accept his one thousand year's of worship in return for one bowl of water.'"

After relating this story, Hadrat said: "Miyā! We cannot even express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ for just one bowl of water which is not even equal to thousands of years of worship. What about the countless other bounties and favours? How, can we have the audacity to assume that we are eligible for high ranks?"

Upon hearing Hadrat's explanation, all the Shaytānic whisperings and thoughts disappeared from this person's heart without any trace. Within a few days he was overpowered by weeping and the realization of his insignificance increased by the day.

Due to the fact that they could not see the fruits thereof, some associates assumed that *dhikr* was having no effect on them. This Shaytānic obstacle would manifest itself in the form of despondency. The person would think to himself: "I have spent so many months making *dhikr*, but I am still not experiencing any enjoyment. What hope is there in experiencing any enjoyment in the future?" Hadrat would fill the hearts of these people with hope, encourage them, and remove their despondency. He would explain to them, saying: "Some *Ahlullāh* experienced a very slight effect, even after several years of striving. Hadrat Jalāl Thānesarī rahimahullāh gave up all his teaching responsibilities and became engrossed in *dhikr bil jahr* (loud *dhikr*) for two whole years. The

only thing he experienced after this entire period was a superficial sound. He wrote to his Shaykh, Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*, and described his condition to him thus: 'Hadrat, I have been engrossed in *dhikr* for two continuous years. Hadrat is aware that I gave up my teaching responsibilities in order to engage myself in *dhikr*. However, I have not experienced the effect of it as yet. I am merely hearing a superficial sound in my head.' His Shaykh replied: 'Do not fret. Persevere with whatever you are doing.'"

*No matter how long it takes to make honey,
in the end it will always taste sweet.*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī used to console them through relating the stories of the righteous, and he would not permit them to lose courage. He used to quote this poem again and again, and would quote it in his replies to their letters:

*Keep working,
and do not keep talking about the work you are doing.
In this path you will have to keep working,
no matter what.*

Those amongst Hadrat's *murīds* who were 'ulamā', and who were engaged in teaching and lecturing as per his instructions, were aided in their striving and *dhikr* through their service in the field of teaching and lecturing, and thus conveyed to their objectives. The *murīds*, who spent lengthy periods of time in striving and *dhikr*, would think to themselves: "These people only come to see Hadrat occasionally, yet they are able to progress so much, while we are not acquiring much, despite the fact that we have remained here for so long." Hadrat would always come to know about these whisperings and – while speaking about another subject – he would convey this message to them: "The purpose of *dhikr* is to remember Allāh ﷻ and to inculcate an inclination towards Him. Since the

'ulamā' acquire this through teaching and lecturing, their mental striving by night and day, and the fact that they convey the teachings of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ are the greatest channels for their reformation and rectification. It is incorrect to think that the 'ulamā' do not engage in *dhikr*."

Once, a person complained to Hadrat that he was not experiencing any benefit, despite engaging in *dhikr* for so long. Hadrat [again] quoted this poem:

*Keep working,
and do not keep talking about the work you are doing.
In this path you will have to keep working,
no matter what.*

Then he added: "Miyā! The people of the past had to bear many hardships and strive for many years, yet you are becoming restless with so little! Hadrat Jalāl Thānesarī *rahimahullāh* only started *sultān al-adhkār* after three years."

In short, Hadrat would not allow any person to lose courage and hope. He would try to get the faint-hearted to work through constant encouragement. This is because the essential benefit of *dhikrullāh* lies in persevering in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. When man remains in Allāh's Court – ready to carry out His Orders – a mere Glance from Allāh ﷻ may grant him forgiveness. We do not know when that Glance of Affection will fall upon us.

*Even though I am not worthy
of presenting myself in the Royal Court ...
Yet, in Your Nobility,
cast a single Glance of Grace upon this lowly servant.*

People expect to see the results of their striving instantly and, if they don't, they become impatient in this regard. This is a form of

audacity and disrespect and could very well become the cause of a person's deprivation and destruction. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was therefore never heedless of rectifying these ills in his associates. He would remove such evil thoughts from the *tālib*'s heart through his verbal statements, writings, and spiritual attention (*tawajjuh*), and he would relate stories of the past elders to them. He would firmly embed in their minds the reality that any perfection in this world can only be attained gradually – through years of striving.

Consider how long it takes for a child to develop into a young man or woman, and how long it takes an ignorant person to become knowledgeable. How can one then possibly expect to acquire the most valuable thing in this world – close proximity to Allāh ﷻ – within a few short days? Even if it takes a thousand years to acquire this bounty, honour and rank, it would be considered 'quick' and a sign of good fortune.

*It takes a long period of growth for a baby
to develop into a fully intelligent, understanding and capable adult.*

*It takes many years for a stone to return to its original glitter ...
for it to be transformed into a ruby, or a beautiful emerald.*

*It takes a long time for a handful of wool to grow
and to be woven into the clothing or coat of a Sufi.*

*It takes an entire season for cotton to grow in the soil,
and to be sewn into the garment of the beloved,
or the shroud of a martyr.*

*We have to anxiously wait for a lengthy time
for a speck [of dust] to be transformed
into a beautiful pearl inside an oyster.*

Being a servant implies servitude, and servitude implies

helplessness. Who ever said that it means that one can make demands before the Master? Moreover, who said that it was permissible to demand anything from Him? Can a person look towards his Beloved with affection and yet make demands of proximity?

*If you desire the love of Layla from the depths of your heart,
[then] transform yourself into a lover in the image of Majnūn*

The true quest of this pure path is that the seeker should obliterate all his own hopes. The sacrifice of all his desires should become the greatest desire of all. Some seekers never make such a request. However, the one who does make this request will have to prove true to his word and be willing to sacrifice his life for it.

*I told my heart: 'Please don't take me to His door,
for He is the King and I do not know the protocol of the Court.'*

*My heart replied: 'Go, and do not talk nonsense!
Either you go to His Door, or He will come to yours.'*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's method of instruction had a special blessing and effect on his associates by means of which they were able to reach their objective within a few months or weeks. Even if it had taken several years, it would still have been considered to be a great feat. A few moments in his presence, and a slight spiritual bond with him, proved to be more beneficial and profitable than spending lengthy periods in various forms of striving (*mujāhadah*).

Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib described his own condition thus: "When Hadrat taught me to engage in *dhikr*, he said: 'You must loudly recite 1000 times *naḥī ithbāt*, 1000 times *ithbāt*, and 3000 times *ism-e-dhāt* during the last part of the night. Furthermore, you must silently recite 24 000 times *ism-e-dhāt* during the remainder of the day and night.' While Hadrat was teaching me all this, a special quality of love for Allāh ﷻ developed in my heart. At the same

time, I perceived a heat in my heart which spread throughout the rest of my body. When I completed my *dhikr* that night, I felt sleepy. While still seated in my place, I felt a fire being ignited and it filled the space between earth and the skies. It filled my body in such a way that I perceived myself sitting on the ground, with my head in the sky, my shoulders were attached to the north and the south, my body became like a rock, and my tongue filled my entire mouth – making it difficult for me to utter a word. After some time this condition passed, but I still felt its effect on my body. The following morning I related my condition to Hadrat. He said: 'Bārakallāh! (may Allāh bless you). The effect of *dhikr* has started.' After this I experienced different forms of illumination as a result of making *dhikr* and my consciousness of *ism-e-dhāt* (the Unique Name of Allāh ﷻ) steadily increased."

One of Hadrat's *khādims* had spent just a few days engaging in loud *dhikr*. One night he went to massage Hadrat's feet and experienced something in his heart, and this condition increased. Hadrat immediately changed his posture, facing in his direction. The *khādim's* condition became unbearable. Hadrat then said to him: "Enough! You may leave." He went to his room, lay down and switched off the lamp. The condition which he had experienced while massaging Hadrat's feet increased to such an extent that he felt as if his own body had become non-existent. He could merely sense his presence 'somewhere'. A veil was raised and a light appeared before him – its vastness seemed to extend beyond the breadth of the earth and its colour was brighter than the morning light. Although his room was pitch dark, he felt as if the morning light was flooding it. Then a red light appeared, and its vastness was equal to the light he had just witnessed. This was followed by different colours of light, one after the other. Finally, he perceived the light of *latīfah akhṣā*. When he related this to Hadrat the following morning, he replied: "Bārakallāh! These were the lights of the *latā'if*."

In the midst of this, an endless voice (*saut-e-sarmadī*) could be heard. It commenced with absolute severity causing shivers to run through the body. At times, this sound was like thunder, and at times it sounded like the striking of chains, while different sounds could be heard at other times.

Every part of his body could perceive this sound and the word 'Allāh' would emanate from it. A few days later he perceived this sound emanating from everything. Eventually, the Blessed Name of Allāh could be heard emanating from the heart of anyone who was seated next to him while engaged in *dhikr*. This condition increased to such an extent that he could eventually perceive and hear the *dhikr* emanating from every part of the person's body.

Some of Hadrat's *murīds* would experience such powerful effects of *dhikr* within a few days, that it would cause their rooms to become illuminated in the darkness of the night. The light would be so intensely powerful that it would become difficult for them to see. These illuminations would sometimes take the form of a person dressed in green or red. It would appear as though he was standing next to them – engaged in *dhikr* or performing *ṣalāh*. At times, the illuminations would take a physical form during *ṣalāh*, or while engaged in *dhikr*. Upon seeing this, the *sālik* would become euphoric and experience an ecstatic condition.

In short, the blessings, effects and results of Imām Rabbānī's teachings were fully acknowledged by the hearts of those who appreciated the value of these Unseen Bounties. Through practising upon his teachings, the enjoyable and pleasant restlessness which could be experienced by the heart on the very first night, would cause the heart to become like a bird which is trapped in a cage – prepared to destroy itself in quest of this joy, and considering it to be the pinnacle of all its desires.

*My heart calls me towards my Beloved at all times.
The place to which it calls me is every place
[where the Beloved can be found].*

This topic is most enjoyable and I do not feel like casting it aside. It is a very extensive topic and would be difficult to complete. The purpose of this subject was merely to show the reader that Hadrat would, in all his teachings, always accord the greatest importance to following the Sunnah. Second to this, he would ensure that every seeker accorded the necessary respect to the *Ahlullāh*. Even if a person was not bound to the teachings of any particular *silsilah*, he would ensure that he always had good thoughts (*husn-e-zann*), confidence in, and love for all the *silsilahs* and *auliyā'*. Thereafter, he would teach them that *dhikr*, *shughl*, *pās anfas*, or *murāqabah* should be adhered to and practiced upon so that it could become a means of fruitful benefit and a means of acquiring blessings.

Differences in temperaments would obviously produce different results and conditions. Some would be overwhelmed by unseen experiences. Others would experience the Presence [of Allāh ﷻ] and thereby become steadfast in *Dīn* and overcome by peace and tranquillity. Some would experience ecstasy and trance, while others would be overpowered with fear, anxiety and weeping. Some would feel intoxicated, while others would experience grief and trembling. The diversity in these conditions and circumstances can neither be understood nor described. Mentioning a method and manner of treatment would therefore not be of any benefit to the reader. Besides, there is no specific and definitive method of treatment which could be presented. For that reason I do not consider it of any value to delve into all of this.

However, I can certainly say that very few people experienced ecstasy and trance from Hadrat's teachings. Those who did experience it, were relieved of this condition and it was replaced with peace and tranquillity within a short period of time. Since the

nature of Hadrat's *nisbat* was very subtle and hidden, his magnanimity permeated his *murīds* and they preferred humility. Thus, no one ever heard about their conditions. Most of his *khulafā'* were cut from the same cloth and – *al-hamdulillāh* – it is still continuing in the same way.

Hadrat did not like his *murīds* to develop the habit of remaining aloof from others and severing relations. If he found this trait in any of them, he would make efforts to remove it. Munshī Qādir Bakhsh Sāhib Bulandshahrī pledged *bay'ah*, returned home and became engrossed in *dhikr* and *shughl* – as per Hadrat's prescription. Within a few days he started to experience extraordinary conditions. He was overjoyed with the pleasure of these experiences. The thought crossed his mind that – if he could experience such joy while remaining aloof from people and engaging in *dhikr* for such a short while – imagine the extent of his joy if he were to sever his ties with this world completely and occupy himself in the remembrance of Allāh in some cave in a mountain, or in a secluded spot in a jungle!

No sooner did these thoughts enter his mind, than his desire to remain in solitude started increasing and his love for his wife and family started to diminish. Eventually he became restless in the presence of his children, developed an aversion towards his relatives and recoiled from the coming and going of his friends and associates. His relatives became distressed by this change in his temperament. They started sweet-talking him, embracing him and begging of him to tell them what they had done wrong and what the reason was that had caused him to remain aloof from everyone? Then they realized that it was the effect of *dhikr* which had caused him to desire solitude, and they realised that it would be difficult to remove this desire for solitude from him. When they felt convinced he would soon leave them and go out into the jungle, they started to criticize and scold him, hoping that he would feel ashamed and desist from such thoughts.

His wife said to him: "It seems you are no longer able to earn a living. That is why you want to abandon everyone." His mother told him: "It is the Maulwī Sāhib [referring to Imām Rabbānī] who made him his *murīd*. He has now taken away my son from me. I had only one support in my life and it has slipped away from me. I am going to write to the Maulwī Sāhib and tell him: 'You have separated a son from his mother. Now you tell us women what we should do.'"

To cut a long story short, his family adopted every possible strategy, but it did not have the least effect on him. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī finally came to know about this, he summoned for Munshī Qādir Bakhsh. When he arrived, Hadrat took him into his room, seated him near him, focused on his heart, and said: "Miyā Qādir Bakhsh! Do you intend doing something which is completely against all the *buzurgs* of the *silsilah* and against the practice of all the Messengers of Allāh? Tell me, how will you be able to live if you should act against them? What benefit will it contain for you? I have heard that you intend leaving your wife, your children and your elderly mother, and that you intend living somewhere far away from them. Listen carefully – this can never happen!"

When Hadrat said this to him, a special love for his wife, children and mother gushed forth from his heart. He developed an intense urge to quickly return to his house and to see their faces. He thus returned and is still living in his house with that same intense attachment and love for his family. After this incident, not the slightest thought of leading a life of solitude and asceticism ever entered his mind again.

Hadrat had the special ability to analyse people's temperaments and to consider their weaknesses and strengths. By virtue of his rank in the Sight of Allāh, his inexperienced *murīds* were engulfed by Allāh's Mercy. By virtue of his sincere submission to Allāh ﷻ, his immature spiritual children and young *murīds* were showered with

Allāh's Grace and Affection at every step of the way. Hadrat's 'children' did not even realise that the affectionate tutoring and training which they had received from him had caused them to blossom. This distant path – which many young men would recoil from – was traversed by Hadrat's *murīds* with absolute peace, and without feeling any fatigue. *Al-hamdulillāh*, this dangerous and terrifying jungle – which many valiant men shuddered to enter – was easily crossed by Hadrat's beloved 'children', without anyone even perceiving it. Not even his 'children' themselves recognized the dangers that were lurking in their path, let alone others.

Hadrat did not like his *murīds* to give up their *halāl* and pure means of livelihood without any valid reason. He would not even hint in the direction that any Muslim should deliberately put himself through the test of desirable (*mustahab*) reliance (*tawakkul*). Obviously, if he found that a companion possessed a resilient temperament, and felt sure that he would be able to bear the difficulties and hardships with patience, he would make a subtle suggestion to him to give up his means of livelihood and to place his total reliance upon Allāh ﷻ.

When Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] sought his counsel in this regard, he told him very clearly: "It is *mubāh* (permissible) for you to keep your properties etc. If you do not keep them, Allāh ﷻ will never cause you any concern about your sustenance." Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī started to become restless with his employment in Gwalior and wanted to leave. Hadrat wrote a reply to his letter. It contained the following: "It is permissible for you to leave your employment if you are able to exercise patience over your unemployment. The rank of an '*ālim*' requires that he should remain seated in the Musjid and live a life of poverty. If you are able to do this, then leave your employment. However, you should first gauge your temperament and whether you feel you will be able to cope. If you think you will not cope, bear the difficulties of your employment and remain

there. I am making *du'ū* for you. You must read *يَا مُغْنِي* (*yā Mughnī*) 1100 times after the *fajr salāh*, and *يَا بَاسِط* (*yā Bāṣitū*) 1100 times after the *'ishā salāh*. This you must read daily."

Consequently, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī acted upon his advice and desposed of all his wealth. Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib commenced with the above *wazīfah*, his hardships disappeared within a few days, his conditions were remedied, and he never experienced any poverty.

In *sulūk*, most attention is paid to the heart. No task can be accomplished without peace and tranquillity. Hadrat therefore gave the greatest amount of attention to the *sālik's* focus and unity of purpose. He would adopt all the desirable means and plans to remove stress, worry and tension. He would adopt unique ways of guiding and steering his *murīds*. Livelihood is such a thing that it causes a person to seek the means of acquiring it from all sides. A believer experiences such worries and concerns about it that, if his condition is not rectified, his *īmān* may fall into danger. Upon seeing the progress and victories of the strong-hearted *mashā'ikh*, a novice in the path of *sulūk* may be overcome with the desire to give up the lawful means of seeking his livelihood. A proficient spiritual physician never considers such a desire to be worthy of consideration. They consider it better for a person to earn a livelihood than to open himself to the complexities and harmful uncertainty which would result if he were to give up his means of livelihood.

The majority of Imām Rabbānī's *murīds* were confined to seeking a means of livelihood while their hearts were attached to Allāh ﷻ. Obviously, in maintaining such contacts [and employment], a person becomes prone to stray thoughts and distractions. Hadrat would adopt appropriate measures to repel these. He would console the person through narrating stories of the pious and righteous elders. He would encourage the person to exercise patience, remind

him of the promises of reward for the pains and concerns which he was experiencing, and thereby he would fill him with confidence and happiness. At times, he would promise to make *du'ā'* in his favour and boost his confidence in this way. Sometimes he would prescribe a *wazīfah* to the person. On the one hand, these temporary measures would boost the person's morale, while on the other hand, Hadrat's prescription of *dhikr wa shughl* would strengthen his heart and fortify his connection of love with Allāh ﷻ. Eventually, these would assist him in concentration and aid him in his path. Then the Gifts of the Beloved [Allāh] would become enjoyable, and they would become the means through which he achieves progress.

*Every pain and sorrow that causes restlessness in your heart
is in reality tranquillity and a pleasure for the lover.*

The grief which had been the cause of the person's detachment and dissociation in the past, would now become the sign of his connection and the mark of his proximity.

*The heart that becomes consumed with love
becomes a mine of grief, sorrow and restlessness.*

*It is not possible to settle that body
which is filled with such frenzied love.*

*O heart, become unconcerned due to [your] happiness,
for you have become aware of the grief of true love.*

The same hardships and calamities, which had previously been the cause of a dreadful and frightening scene, would now become the salient features of the close servants [of Allāh ﷻ] and garments to the righteous, and would announce their inclusion amongst the beloved servants of Allāh ﷻ.

*There is a [hidden] secret for us in love:
Work and effort are stolen from the lovers.
[In their quest for love, their efforts often seem in vain.]*

*Sometimes the beautiful necks of our beloveds
have been made to drink poison.
Sometimes they are beheaded with swords.²⁶*

*We look after Our enemies and We love Our friends.
No one has the least reason to complain of Our Decision.
They used a saw on Nabī Zakarīyyā ﷺ
yet We kept Nabī Yahya ﷺ alive through trying circumstances.*

In their concern for a livelihood, and out of fear of poverty, some people used to resort to alchemy, while others desired wealth to come to them from the unseen. [In their effort to obtain 'easy money'], they would consider this to be lawful and pure earning and thus they would devote all their time and effort towards it. This was a two-fold illness: (1) They would spend all the wealth they possessed in its quest [and become distracted from their true purpose]. (2) Due to this, their poverty would inevitably increase. Imām Rabbānī would therefore aim to remove these ailments as quick as possible. He would remind the person of the failure and terrible condition of those who had tried to obtain 'easy money' [in the past]. He would prohibit the person from such activities – explicitly and implicitly. He would direct his own spiritual focus towards the person, whilst relating stories of the righteous to him. In so doing, he would free the seeker's heart and mind from such whisperings.

Munshī Qādir Bakhsh writes: I was quite stressed because I could

²⁶ This verse means that we need to sacrifice ourselves in order to obtain proximity to Allāh ﷻ, and obliterate ourselves [our own desires] in quest of this proximity.

not find a job and the running expenses of my house were quite high. I used to impose *dhikr wa shughl* upon my heart, but this concern dominated my thoughts all the time and spoiled my joy. I went to Gangoh with the intention of asking Hadrat for a practice ('*amal*') which would provide me with help from the unseen. I would then be able to remain at home without any worry and would be able to occupy myself in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. I presented myself to Hadrat but did not get the opportunity to forward my request. Hadrat was alone in his room one day and I felt that this was the ideal opportunity for me to approach him with my request. I went inside, but before I could say anything to him, he said: "Bhāi Qādir Bakhsh! Read this *wazīfah*. It will benefit you tremendously. *Inshā Allāh*, you will not experience any poverty." I said: "Hadrat, teach me an unseen practice." He said: "What I told you is sufficient."

He returned home and started reading the *wazīfah* which Hadrat had taught him. From the moment he started it, he experienced comfort and, no matter how difficult a task may have been, the means to accomplish it would be provided to him by Allāh ﷻ and all his needs were fulfilled with peace and comfort.

*The special servants of the 'Knower of the Unseen' ...
the foundation of their hearts is to seek the Beloved.
Before Him all the secrets of their hearts are exposed,
even as a thought enters the depths of their hearts.*

A *sālik* is a person who has completely subjugated himself in Allāh's Path. His training includes the protection of his thoughts, the treatment of his internal self, and the adoption of methods to rectify and reform his heart. His training is concealed and hidden – like a hidden pearl. Although one experiences ecstasy, it can only be understood by one's emotion. This is something very lofty and beyond the understanding of someone like me. It is, in itself, very difficult to understand the outward forms of rectification which are

beneficial for certain spiritual ailments. When Allāh ﷻ opens the 'eyes' of a person's heart, such a person automatically knows what illnesses his soul is suffering from and what the best method of treatment would be. I do not intend teaching these methods of treatment, nor do I have the ability to teach it.

What I wish to demonstrate is that Imām Rabbānī – through his expertise and Allāh-endowed insight – had been blessed with a lofty position of instruction. We could refer to him as a *mujaddid* in this field [the *ṭarīqah*]. The large number of dead souls which were revived at the hands of this 'messiah' was, in itself, a manifestation of Allāh's Power. Others may be able to fathom and perceive this, but it is certainly beyond me. Like his treatment of physical ailments, he would certainly adopt a variety of measures when treating spiritual ailments. However, a measure is merely a measure, and what is obvious is plain to see. The fact of the matter is that [although these measures were not without benefit] these ailments were removed through the internal spiritual attention and focus which Imām Rabbānī had directed towards every *sālik*. Their cure was the fruit of his spiritual attention.

The essence of his training and instruction was that a Muslim should become a helpless servant of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh's Pleasure should supercede the most desirable of all his desires, and obedience to Him should become the most beloved of all things. The person should become like an infant in the care of a wet-nurse. He should become like a corpse, and the Orders of Allāh ﷻ should be as one who bathes this corpse – tossing and turning him at Will. The Sharī'ah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ should permeate every part of his body and become part and parcel of all his actions, and even his inaction.

The interim period, between the time of his birth and the time when he is placed in his grave – in other words, his entire life – should be a physical manifestation of the splendid palace which Rasūlullāh ﷺ

had constructed during the twenty-three years of his mission as a Prophet. The person should neither come to a standstill of his own accord, nor should he move of his own accord. If he sleeps, he should sleep in emulation of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ order. When he wakes up, he should wake in emulation of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ order. This is the meaning of true love. This is *sulūk*, and this is the *ṭarīqah*.

What is Ishq (intense love)?

Say: [It is] to become the slave of the Beloved.

*It is to place your feet into the Hands of another,
and to place your hands into the Hands of another.
[and to allow the Beloved to control you.]*

This instruction is the essence of all rectification, and the embodiment of all the teachings expressed in the Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Say: If you love Allāh, then follow me. Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. Surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful."

The quest for this love is dependent upon following the beloved [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] of the Lord of the worlds. The person who possesses the quality of following and emulating Rasūlullāh ﷺ, is promised the splendorous crown of becoming the Beloved of Allāh ﷻ.

This is the actual *wilāyat* and proximity, and this is the guarantee for forgiveness and acceptance [in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ]. Thousands of people have sacrificed their lives for it, and the continued existence of this world is dependent upon this instruction and teaching. Dying in its cause is the essence of life itself, and annihilating oneself in its quest is equal to a thousand lifetimes. If

only the author [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] could obtain a flicker of it, hold onto a guide and a group of travellers on this long and dangerous journey, and reach his goal ...

*Life cannot be called ‘life’ [just] because I am living.
‘Alive’ is he who is in love with the Beloved.*

TAZKIYAH AND TAṢARRUFĀT

*Both their hearts and souls are alive [the Auliya’],
and they are the possessors of high and lofty attributes.*

*They are the life spring (source of life)
for those who thirst after Divine Love,
and the light of guidance to the Straight Path
to those who are astray.*

*They guide the lost ones who have strayed from the truth
to the brilliant Straight Path.*

*They are the clear proof and evidence
of the Lord of the Universe to His creation.*

*Seekers who remain on their trail
[and follow in their footprints]
are blessed with the Divine Bounties and Help of Allāh
and they [the seekers] are led to His Majestic Court.*

*In their shade do dead hearts find life ...
In their illumination does the world become illuminated.*

*They are blessed with servants (khādims) who serve them,
yet [they] are independent of the creation.
But their hearts are in possession of Divine Secrets
and are always in communion with Allāh.*



*Even if I should continue to mention his qualities
until the Day of Judgement ...
Even then shall these qualities
not reach its end or limit.*

*If you should try to find the end of his beneficence,
no end shall you find in sight (it is endless).*

*Even if you should try to drain all the water
from the sea (of the central part of Asia),
you will not be able to empty it.*

*One person drinking to quench his thirst
will have no effect in lessening it.*

This topic is dependent on internal perception and, in order to derive enjoyment from it, one would require emotion. Neither the pen nor the tongue can do justice to this topic. Nevertheless, every person can understand the following: Man has been endowed with five senses through which he is inclined towards desirable things, and through which he shuns undesirable things. For example, the eyes enjoy looking at beautiful and admirable things, and abhors ugly forms and shapes. The ears derive pleasure from sweet tones, and recoil from gruff voices. The tongue is attracted to tasty foods, and shrinks away from distasteful or bitter fruit. Similarly, the nose is attracted to pleasant fragrances, and dislikes bad odours. The faculty of touch enjoys touching soft and delicate items, and dislikes touching hard and course items.

Man has also been given a 'sixth sense' which has been placed in the heart. Like the external senses, it derives pleasure from desirable things and abhors undesirable things. If the external senses are healthy and in a state of well-being, they are able to truly derive pleasure from desirable things and have no real inclination

towards undesirable things. Similarly, if the heart's perception is healthy and in a state of well-being, it is inclined towards obedience to Allāh ﷻ and to obtaining His Pleasure, and derives enjoyment from it.

When Allāh imposes afflictions upon a heedless man, and he becomes accustomed to committing sins, the inclination of the heart is completely overturned. Just as sweet things would taste bitter to a person who has a fever, a person who is intoxicated with heedlessness would find joy in sinning. He would consider obedience to be a burden and would become perturbed by it. Bringing the heart back to its original condition of perception is known as *ihtidā'* (seeking guidance) and the existence of both *Dīn* and *dunyā* is dependent upon it.

The accepted servants of Allāh ﷻ – whose internal perception has become sound and healthy – continually partake of the delightful foods of obedience. The more they eat these 'foods', the stronger their hearts become, and the clearer their perception. Just as physical strength is able to control tangible items and a strong person is able to make changes and alterations to physical things through his Allāh-bestowed power, the spiritual strength of the heart – known as *qūwwat-e-qudsīyyah* – has an influence over other hearts, and it is able to polish those dark and rust-encrusted hearts by the permission of Allāh ﷻ. Spiritual perception cannot be attained without first removing this darkness and rust.

Utilizing this *qūwwat-e-qudsīyyah* is known as *tasarruf* (the ability to control and influence) and it is this very same *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification) which is the second order of Prophethood – after the order to convey Allāh's injunctions. Allāh ﷻ says [with regard to Rasūlullāh's ﷺ duties as a Prophet]:

يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

"He recites to them His verses and purifies them..."

The instruction and training which follows it becomes a source of wisdom and steadfastness in *Dīn*:

وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

"He teaches them the Book and wisdom..."

For anything or anyone to be effective, it is necessary that the recipient should first of all be worthy and eligible to receive it. The effectiveness of *taṣarrufāt* (influences) is dependent upon the spiritual strength of the *mutaṣarrif* Shaykh (the Shaykh who is wielding his influence) and the strength of his heart. Consequently, the *taṣarrufāt* of some *Ahlullāh* have reached a lofty and astonishing level, beyond our comprehension. What will a person, who possesses no understanding of this 'sixth sense', know about these *taṣarrufāt*? Even if he should hear about it – why would he believe it? These topics, therefore, remain connected to the *wijdān* (perception), which is something every sound-hearted Muslim is in possession of. It is the light that illuminates the path towards the truth.

Allāh ﷻ appointed Imām Rabbānī as a deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in this tumultuous era for the purpose of teaching the injunctions of the Sharī'ah and purifying and cleansing the hearts. Thus, we cannot even imagine the level of his *qīwwat-e-qudsīyyah*. Thirteen centuries after Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the *ummah* had become total slaves of the customs of their era – customs which had replaced the compulsory duties of the Sharī'ah. Their deprivation of spiritual perception was obvious. This was especially true where the desires of the soul had caused them to consider *bid'āt* (innovations) as 'ibādāt (acts of worship), and where materialistic *maulwīs* had labelled the sanctified group of *Ahlullāh* as 'Wahhābīs' and thereby caused the masses to become averse to them and to shun them.

Under such circumstances, it is only a strong-hearted Shaykh who could draw their aversion-filled hearts.

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān is a resident of Ābhah. His poor father was a religious man, but when he heard that Deobandī *maulwīs* are Wahhābīs, he became averse to meeting them. On one occasion, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī], and Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib came to Nānautā. It was a Friday, and a few people came from Ābhah for the *jumu'ah salāh*. Nazar Muḥammad Khān Sāhib was a youngster at the time, but he was quite intelligent. He said to his father: "I am going to Nānautā. I have heard that a few *maulwīs* have come there." His father prohibited him saying: "Bhāī, they are Wahhābīs, and we ought to abstain from the company of Wahhābīs." He replied: "Yes, they may be Wahhābīs, but I have never seen Wahhābīs before and my heart desires to see what they look like." His father did not want to send him with outsiders, so he personally went with his son, saying: "I have also never seen any Wahhābī. Let's go and see what they look like."

When they stepped into the Jāmi' Musjid, their eyes first fell on Hadrat Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Maulānā had just performed *ghusl* and was drying his hair outside. First of all, he was very handsome. The light and effulgence which emanated from his face made him appear even more handsome. They were astounded and continued staring at him for a long time. They thought to themselves: "Wahhābīs ought to appear more ugly and repulsive than the Shī'ah, but this person appears to be the embodiment of light and effulgence." They proceeded and presented themselves before Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. No sooner did they meet him, when they felt something unique within their hearts and they developed great love for him. After the *jumu'ah salāh* an announcement was made that Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib was going to deliver a lecture. Hadrat Maulānā used to accord utmost respect to Imām Rabbānī and therefore declined to deliver a lecture. However, upon

Imām Rabbānī's insistence, Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Qāsim Nānautwī] went forward and started to shower his words of wisdom upon the audience.

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān Sāhib used to relate: "We were constantly indoctrinated into thinking that these Deobandī 'ulamā' reject Rasūlullāh ﷺ, that they are disrespectful towards him, and that they are Wahhābīs. It was Hadrat Maulānā's *karāmat* for having commenced his lecture on the merits and excellent qualities of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His eloquence was obvious, but the fine points which he mentioned were probably never even dreamt of by the *maulūd* group and our hearts were blossoming like flowers. I said to my father: 'Janāb! If this is what it is to be a Wahhābī, then I have become a Wahhābī. I cannot be separated from them.'"

In short, they had arrived as antagonistic onlookers, but they left as sincere, devoted servants. The fruit of their sincerity and devotion increased by the day and it continued blossoming.

There are thousands of stories of this nature. I related just one incident to demonstrate how Allāh ﷻ had blessed this sanctified group with the ability to influence (*taṣarruf*) non-adherents. Conversely, others find it difficult to influence and control their own adherents – even when they spread their web of [good] character and kindness.

There are many from amongst Imām Rabbānī's *murīds* who, at some time in their past, held onto incorrect beliefs. However, once they remained in his company, they were completely overpowered by his *qūwwat-e-qudsīyyah*. Not only did they adopt correct beliefs, but they became his devoted *khādims*. If this was the level of the general *taṣarrufāt* which he had on outsiders, what can be said of the excellent effects that were enjoyed by those who had developed some affiliation with him, or by those who had become his *khādims* and *murīds*? It is difficult to gauge the extent of the effect he had on

them. No matter how materialistic a person may have been – the moment he presented himself before Hadrat, he would experience a desire to turn to Allāh ﷻ and to be obedient unto Him. This change in him would be so drastic, that he would never have dreamt it to be possible prior to meeting Hadrat. His heart, which had been engrossed in the temporary and fleeting concerns and occupations of this world, would experience the effect of vigilance and he would question himself: “How long are you going to remain engrossed in the futile activities of this world, and why are you heedless of acquiring the eternal bounties [of the Hereafter]?”

The person would become remorseful and regret the time he had wasted in the past. He would develop a yearning for the Hereafter. Since this [repentance] is the basis for the acquisition of the fruits of the Hereafter, the more the person progressed in this regard, the more his quest for the truth would increase, and the more he would experience an increase in his yearning to reach Allāh ﷻ.

It would be difficult for us to fathom the extremely powerful nature of the spiritual *tasarrufāt* (influences) which Imām Rabbānī wielded. Since this influence is such that it is highly affected by the affinity and bond between the *murīd* and his Shaykh, everyone – the near, the distant, the present and the absent – were all equal in benefiting from his *qīwvat-e-qudsīyyah*.

Sufi Karam Husayn was in his hometown. After the *fajr salāh* he became involved in his worldly activities and remained occupied until the *zuhr adhān*. He left his work aside, performed his *zuhr* and went back to his work until 'asr – and then until *maghrib*. He remained fully occupied in his work the entire day and missed all his *awrād wa adhkār* (different forms of *dhikr*) for the day. He certainly performed every *fard salāh*, but it was only his body which was standing before Allāh ﷻ, while his mind remained attached to his work.

After *maghrib*, while still busy with his work, his heart suddenly experienced an external influence which compelled him to leave the work at hand and occupy himself in *dhikr*. The more he tried to repel these thoughts, the more they imposed upon him. They eventually fell upon his heart like a continuous downpour, which caused him to lose control over his hands and legs. He performed his *'ishā salāh* and remained engrossed in Allāh ﷻ – expressing his remorse and turning to Him for several hours. His heart experienced complete joy and contentment in this.

Hāfiz 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib Barelwī completed memorizing the Qur'ān when he was twenty-one years old and, for a few years thereafter, he performed *tarāwīḥ salāh*. Then he became completely engrossed in earning his livelihood. This caused him to neglect the basic recitation of the Qur'ān. Obviously, remembering the Qur'ān is dependent upon constant revision and recitation. If this revision is non-existent, how can a person remember the Qur'ān? Within a few years, he had forgotten everything. Initially he felt great remorse for having allowed himself to lose such a great bounty, but after some time even this remorse disappeared. Twenty-two years passed in this condition. Not a single time did the thought cross his mind that he used to be in possession of such a great treasure, but that he had allowed it to be snatched away from him and it had left him a pauper.

He was forty five years old when he presented himself before Hadrat. His father passed away a few days after he had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat. Instead of an increase in concern for worldly burdens, he had suddenly become remorseful for having deprived not only himself, but also his father, of the benefits of memorizing the Qur'ān. This concern increased to such an extent that he could not think of anything else. When he considered his age, he could feel that his mind had become weak and his memory had become incapable. However, his yearning had left him restless. Since these thoughts were the results of his Shaykh's *taṣarruf*, he plucked up

the courage and wrote a letter to Hadrat in which he informed him of his intention. Hadrat replied: "Put in all your effort and Allāh ﷻ will assist you. Leave aside all your *wird wa shughl* (different forms of *dhikr* and spiritual practices) and remain engrossed in this [the re-memorization of the Qur'ān]. When man applies his mind to something, all difficulties become easy."

He placed his trust in Allāh ﷻ, resumed the memorization of the Qur'ān, and reached his goal within a few months. He has now performed several *tarāwīh ṣalāhs* and, despite his worldly occupations, he has developed an ardent love for the recitation of the Qur'ān – so much so, that he never omits the reading of a *manzil*²⁷ on any day.

Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib was a teacher at Madrasah Shāhjahānpūr. He lay down before *'ishā ṣalāh* and fell asleep. He had a dream in which he saw himself in Gangoh. A congregational *ṣalāh* was in progress and Hadrat was leading the *ṣalāh*. He saw himself performing *wudū'* in order to join the congregation, but the congregation ended before he could complete his *wudū'*. He, together with a few others, were deprived of joining the congregation. Upon completing his *ṣalāh*, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī came into the courtyard of the Musjid and, in an angry tone, he addressed all those who had not performed their *ṣalāh* with congregation, saying: "People claim allegiance to me, yet they are so unmindful of *ṣalāh*!"

Maulwī Sahūl Sāhib regretted his negligence and his eyes opened immediately. He realized that it was already midnight. He got up, performed his *ṣalāh*, and remained vigilant since that day.

²⁷ Just as the Qur'ūn is divided into thirty *pārās/juz* to facilitate monthly completion, it is also divided into seven *manzils* to facilitate weekly completion.

Inspector Asad 'Alī Sāhib was initially an irreligious person. His appointment as a police inspector, and the nineteen certificates which he had obtained, were obviously acquired after much effort and toiling. He personally acknowledges: "I was extremely strict by nature and very audacious. Wearing English [western] clothes had become my salient feature. I did not differentiate between lawful and unlawful, right and wrong. While in this condition, I pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat. When I returned to my work, I suddenly started to developed an aversion towards this world and a yearning for the Hereafter. I lost all interest in my occupation as an inspector. I became remorseful over wasting my life in this way. I felt like leaving my employment, going into a cave, and spending my time in Allāh's remembrance. I developed a natural inclination towards following the Sharī'ah. Without anyone advising me or instructing me, I felt an aversion towards wearing English [western] clothes. Within a few days, I became like a *mullā* [*maulwī*] – wearing a long *kurtah* and a pants which was above my ankles. I neither bothered about promotion in my employment nor about any increase in my income."

People started laughing at him and mocked his condition. But, he had become extremely remorseful over his evil ways. He would remain in solitude and weep over his sins. He would say to himself: "How sorrowful! For what purpose have I been sent into this world and what have I been doing with my time?"

How could he possibly have maintained his job while in such a condition? He was reprimanded and was forced to change jobs several times. Eventually he became very restless with his employment and felt that it would be a great boon if he were to resign. He handed in his resignation and informed Hadrat about it. He wrote to Hadrat saying: "I now have no desire except presenting myself in your court and spending my entire life there." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī wrote back: "Consider whatever falls in your destiny to be for your own good and remain pleased with it, even if

it appears indigestible. I desire this for you and for all my associates, and make *du'ā'* as well. My hands are extended in *du'ā'* for the well-being of all of you. What else can this unworthy servant do? That is all. Was salām. Consider the non-acceptance of your resignation to be to your advantage."

Munshī Asad 'Alī Sāhib was astonished when he received this letter, because he had been reprimanded by his employers and had already handed in his resignation. How could they not accept his resignation? Allāh ﷻ Alone knows in which office his resignation was mislaid. Several years passed without receiving any reply. People started to show appreciation for the dress code which he had adopted. He is presently an inspector in Peshawar.

Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib Marḥūm had remained in the company of several *buzurgs* before and pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat. He relates: "While I was employed as a police officer, I went to Pīlībhet for the arrest of an escaped criminal. While I was there, I went to the Jāmi' Musjid for the *jumu'ah ṣalāh*. After the ṣalāh, one of the elders delivered a talk and I remained behind to listen to it. In the midst of his talk, he said: 'The lives of the *buzurgs* are unique. When they laugh, everyone laughs with them. When they cry, everyone cries with them.' This was not a mere statement, but a fact. On one occasion, a *buzurg* was delivering a talk and, during the talk, he started laughing. The entire assembly joined him. A little while later he was overcome by emotion and started to cry – and the entire assembly was reduced to tears."

When Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib finished his story, his grandson, Munshī 'Abd al-'Alīm Sāhib asked: "Nānājī, did you ever see such *karāmāt* from Maulānā Gangohī?" He replied: "Miyā! What can I say? I saw things with Hadrat that I never saw anywhere else. I accepted bribes for twenty-eight years during my employment as a police officer. I imprisoned and hanged countless innocent people. I committed thousands of acts of oppression. I

twisted the truth into falsehood and vice versa. I never differentiated between right and wrong. My heart had become absolutely hardened, never turning its attention to the Hereafter. I remained in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's company for just three days. I do not know what he did, or how he broke me. I returned from there as a forbearing, merciful, justice-loving person. I became punctual in my ṣalāh and tahajjud, I became averse to receiving bribes, gave up wearing unlawful clothing, followed the Sunnah and adhered to the Sharī'ah. I experienced all this – simply by remaining in Hadrat's company – before I could even pledge *bay'ah* to him. Hadrat did not accept my *bay'ah* until my heart had been fully reformed. As for Hadrat's *taṣarrufāt* after pledging *bay'ah* to him ... these are beyond description."

He is the very same Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib who was called to Bombay by Nawāb Maḥmūd 'Alī Khān Sāhib. Upon the advice of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, he had appointed Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib as his special administrator – overseeing the administration of the affairs of the province. A'lā Hadrat had told him: "It would be difficult to find another person as religious and trustworthy as Daust Muḥammad Khān. You must certainly keep him by your side."

There are many astounding and mind-boggling stories about his piety and righteousness. He was completely overcome by soft-heartedness. Whenever he read the Qur'ān, he would cry so profusely that he would fall unconscious. The pages of the Qur'ān would become wet with his tears. At times he would tremble uncontrollably. Onlookers would fear for his life, thinking that he was in the throes of death. If anyone were to mention Hadrat Imām Rabbānī to him while he was in this condition, he would tremble and his entire beard would become wet with tears. When he became terminally ill, a famous doctor of Ilāhābād examined him and diagnosed his illness. He said: "Something major has affected his heart and liver, which has caused his liver to perforate. His stool is

being excreted through his private part. Do not allow him to read the Qur'ān and do not mention his *pīr* before him, otherwise it will be difficult for him to survive." But who could have stopped him, and if anyone did try to stop him, would he have paid any heed?

He was a passionate lover of the Qur'ān. He never missed Qur'ān recitation and *tahajjud* right until the end. The night before he passed away, he started making loud *dhikr* and constantly looked at the watch to see the time. Each time he looked at the watch, he said: "The night is still long." When he completed his *tahajjud* and *dhikr*, he had his legs massaged, performed *fajr salāh*, looked at the watch and, when it was six o' clock, he said: "There is very little time left." Saying this, he asked everyone to leave the room and became engrossed in *ishrāq salāh* while he was lying down. He spent a few minutes in this condition in the throes of death, raised his index finger and eyes towards the sky, and proceeded to his Creator. He was buried next to the grave of Hadrat Muhibbullāh Ilāhābādī rahimahullāh, who was a Shaykh of his *silsilah*. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

When he was placed in his grave and his face was exposed, a unique condition was experienced by all those who were present, and his friends and foes all said: "Allāh, Allāh! May thousands of lives be sacrificed for such a wonderful death." Those who would like an example of how Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad's murīds had reached the close proximity of Allāh ﷻ should look at the death of Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib. His face was eventually covered, timbers were placed over his body and his grave was filled.

When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was informed of Hājī [Daust Muḥammad Khān] Sāhib's demise, he wrote a letter of condolence to his son, Nadhar Muḥammad Khān Bhaungāmī, saying: "Do not worry. *Inshā Allāh*, your father has been forgiven. You may be at peace with this." His son has preserved this 'letter of glad tidings' –

just as one would preserve a certificate – and still has it with him today.

To what extent can one enumerate Imām Rabbānī's spiritual *taṣarrufāt*? The practical and intellectual merits of his senior *murīds* are known to all. The truth of the matter is that even the lowest amongst his associates cannot be considered as failures. No sooner had the most materialistic of all people, or the one most engrossed in the fleeting occupations of this world, held onto his teachings, than he would certainly surpass others in some qualities and attributes. The minimum effect of remaining in his company and pledging *bay'ah* to him, was that every *khādim* undoubtedly gave preference to the everlasting Hereafter over this fleeing world. Many of Hadrat's associates, who had previously been engrossed in outward sins due to the dictates of their souls (*nafs*), became fearful [servants] after receiving only a little training and tutoring from him, and turned towards Allāh ﷻ upon his slightest encouragement. If nothing else, the tranquility of the silent night would be sufficient to admonish them. They would grieve over the destruction of their *Dīn*, and would cry before Allāh ﷻ in remorse for their evil deeds. The seed which had been firmly planted in their hearts could never be removed – no matter how tumultuous the storm. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ Alone.

Desire for the Hereafter is the prelude to spiritual perception. This was one of his ordinary *taṣarrufāt* and none of his *murīds* were deprived of. As for the fruits and effects ... these are generally dependent upon the heart's focus and the efforts which are made to maintain the heart's condition. So, the one who was inspired by Allāh ﷻ would benefit from his company and service and, within a few days, he would depart with untold treasures which he would have struggled to acquire in a number of years had he been anywhere else. Rocks were turned into wax, snow melted into water, coldness and foolishness were turned into warmth and wisdom, negligence was converted to vigilance, dreams were

turned into reality, a state of restriction was converted to expansion, and lowliness was replaced with loftiness. The seekers from numerous paths united under the affectionate shade of a single person. All their difficulties and hardships were removed. Even if every hair on their bodies were to express its gratitude, it would not be able to do so.

The physician of the *ummah*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] writes:

"His companionship had a special effect upon the hearts of people. It instilled a unique tranquillity and composure within their hearts, no matter how distressed a person may have been, and irrespective of the profusion of whisperings. The moment anyone would sit in his company, all his heartache would be removed. We noticed integrity in beliefs and steadfastness in *Dīn* to a level of near perfection in almost all his *murīds* – especially with regard to love and hate for the Sake of Allāh. All this was by virtue of his companionship. Countless incidents testify to these merits.

I experienced some bestowal and favour every time I met with him, and each time I corresponded with him. However, as per Rasūlullāh's ﷺ instruction:

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ

"The one who does not show gratitude to people, cannot show gratitude to Allāh."

Two favours are more noteworthy [than the others]. One concerns 'ilm-e-zāhirī (external knowledge) and the other concerns 'ilm-e-bāṭinī (internal spiritual knowledge).

The first favour:

Although I possessed correct beliefs regarding the differences between the *ahl-e-haqq* and *ahl-e-bid'ah*, I was guilty of

committing a particular wrong. I had many ideas and notions regarding this error and many of my actions emanated from these. This can be further explained as follows: There were certain customs which were widely practiced upon, such as the *mīlād* gatherings. Due to some of its intrinsic evils, some erudite scholars considered these gatherings to be absolutely unlawful to the masses. For that reason they used to prohibit the '*ulamā*' from attending these gatherings. I always considered those evils to be abhorrent and considered those who commit them to be worthy of criticism. This was based upon the correctness of my beliefs. I used to constantly explain this and inform the masses about these evils. However, I was convinced that the reason ('*illat*') for the prohibition was the evils itself, and that the prohibition would not apply if the '*illat*' [evils] were absent. Therefore, [according to my reasoning] since the '*ulamā*' were free from these evils, there would be no need to prohibit them from participating. Similarly, there would be no need for a general prohibition on the masses. Rather, I felt that they should be given permission for these acts, while the evils which they were committing in the process should be rectified. In fact, I considered this permission to be desirable, because it would [be an opportunity to] correct their beliefs as well – the same incorrect beliefs which were the basis for the prohibition in the first place. If we [the '*ulamā*'] were to prohibit them unilaterally, the masses would consider us to be their antagonists and their beliefs would never be rectified.

I spent a considerable period in this condition and, although I was occupied in teaching and imparting Hadīth, *fiqh* and other lessons, my mind never ventured to the contrary.

How can I ever thank Hadrat rahimahullāh. In his absolute compassion and affection, he conveyed his disappointment in me via Maulwī Munawwar 'Alī Sāhib Darbhāngūmī Marhūm.

One of my mistakes in this regard was that, when some practices of

some Sufis did not coincide with the Sharī'ah, I practised upon the saying:

خُذْ مَا صَفَا وَدَعْ مَا كَدَّرَ

"Accept what is pure and discard what is filthy."

I followed some of his [the Sufi who did not apply the Sharī'ah in totality] *adhkār wa ashghāl* (*dhikr* and spiritual practices) which he had taught me. I also had the opportunity to visit him and to stay in his company for some time. As for the evils and harms ... I had the same notion as previously. I felt that the beliefs of the '*ulamā*' were correct and that there was therefore no real harm in this case. I felt that it would be sufficient to continue informing the masses about that which is right and that which is wrong. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* also expressed his particular disappointment in this regard.

The level of his affection can be gauged from the fact that he never reprimanded me directly. This was in line with the Hadīth's description of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His level of affection and modesty did not permit him to reprimand anyone directly. Although I had visited Hadrat on numerous occasions, he never reprimanded me directly. In fact, he went one step further. Whenever anyone objected to my actions, Hadrat would always rationalize them [my actions] and attempt to portray them in a good light.

Another error of mine was connected to the above. Hadrat Pīr wa Murshid Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had provided me with concise details on the subject of the prohibition of getting involved in contentious issues (*masā'il-e-mukhtalafah*) and he had asked me to expound on this subject. Since my mind was still bent on my [personal] opinions regarding this subject, I expounded upon it in the same light. I wrote it down and read it to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to remain in solitude and intermingled very little with the masses. He always had good

thoughts about the masses and was not fully aware of their ignorance and deviation. Consequently, he approved of my explanation and made a few changes here and there. Although I was the author of the subject matter, it had been written upon Hadrat's [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] personal instruction. Therefore he had it written down from his side, embellished it with his stamp and signature and permitted me to publish it on his behalf. It was published under the title *Fayslah Haft Mas'alah*.

Some people, of little intelligence, considered this to be in support of *bid'āt*. How they could think this when it contained a clear refutation of those evils and harms is beyond me! The concession was only given to those people who possessed correct beliefs and rational thinking – and even this was based upon my erroneous thinking that the evils of the masses would not have an effect upon the '*ulamā*'.

Hadrat conveyed all of this to me via Maulwī Munawwar 'Alī Sāhib. When he conveyed it to me, I immediately realized my error by virtue of his powerful impact. However, I felt the need to correspond with him for the purpose of further clarification. Consequently, several letters were written from both sides, and copies of these letters have been preserved in a few places.²⁸ In short, through Allāh's Grace, I was eventually apprised of my error through insight and thorough investigation. Upon being apprised of it, a huge door of knowledge – which had been shut for a long time – opened up to me. The essence of it was: Corruption of beliefs is certainly the basis for the prohibition. However, corruption of beliefs is all-encompassing, irrespective of whether the doer commits it directly, or whether he is the cause of it being

²⁸ These letters are quoted verbatim in volume one of this book under the chapter, "Correspondence between Hadrat Thānwī and Hadrat Imām Rabbānī".

committed. Thus, if the doer is an ordinary Muslim, his beliefs will certainly be corrupt. If he is from amongst the '*ulamā*', then – even if he possessed correct beliefs – he would become the cause of corrupting the beliefs of the masses. We are prohibited from becoming the cause of corruption. Although, through the previously-mentioned article [*Fayṣlah Haft Mas'alah*], it would have been possible to inform the masses of the evils and harms, all of them would not have been rectified through it, nor would the article have reached all of them. Thus, if an ordinary person were to hear that a certain '*ālim*' had committed the act [of attending the *mīlād* gatherings], but this person was unaware that he [the '*ālim*'] had rectified the beliefs, the '*ālim*' would have become the cause of this ordinary person's deviation. Obviously, if a person becomes the cause of the deviation of just one person, it is a major evil. Even if there are a few advantages within the evil, the principle is that, if an act contains both good and bad consequences and the act is not an essential objective in the Sharī'ah, the act must be discarded. Based upon this principle, we will not pay any attention to acquiring those [few] advantages. Instead, we will discard the act in order to abstain from its evils.

As for an act which is essential [according to the Sharī'ah] ... if a few evils should creep into it, the act will not be discarded. Instead, all possible efforts will be made to rectify these evils. All these injunctions and principles are clearly stated in the Ahādīth and literature on jurisprudence, and are not unknown to experts in the field. I have written in this regard in my book, *Islāh ar-Rusūm* (*Rectification of Customs*). When my thoughts and opinions regarding this subject were rectified, all other related matters were also rectified by the Grace of Allāh ﷻ. Consequently, I also gained salvation from the companionship and instructions of those Sufis who did not comply with the Sharī'ah. I also wrote an addendum to *Fayṣlah Haft Mas'alah* and had it published. In this way, all the misgivings and criticism was removed.

The second favour:

The second favour is related to the *bāṭin*. If I were to go into its details, I would have to expose certain private matters. The story itself is very terrifying and unpalatable. I will therefore restrict myself to the gist of it. As a result of my many evils and sins, I became severely despondent with life, despite enjoying good physical health. In fact, I considered death to be far better than life. A poet expresses this condition better than I am able to:

*Majnūn's soul faced two types of sadness and sorrow:
One, [upon] the separation from Layla ...
and the other,
the worry (anxiety) of meeting Layla.²⁹*

Hadrat accorded special attention to me through *du'ā'*, instruction and encouragement. Consequently, I came to my senses, my life was re-ignited and – *al-hamdulillāh* – I experienced the benefits when this condition was lifted from me. I hope that I will never forget these two favours for as long as I am alive. We have also been commanded:

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ

'The one who does not show gratitude to people, cannot show gratitude to Allāh.'

[This concludes Hadrat Thānwī's discussion.]

Once, while Hadrat was delivering a Hadīth lesson, a person who seemed to be quite distressed presented himself before him and said: "Hadrat, I ask you in the Name of Allāh to turn your attention

²⁹ In this poem, 'the anxiety of meeting' refers to the knowledge of the impending separation whenever they meet.

to me." Hadrat replied: "Bhāi, I am just an ordinary *mullā* (*maulwī*). If you wish to ask a ruling or injunction you may ask me. As for matters related to the Sufis ... you should go to the Sufis and ask them." The person said: "Hadrat, I am fed up with life. Will you accept it if I commit suicide and die?" Hadrat smiled and said: "Allow me to continue teaching, while you go and sit against that wall." Saying this, Hadrat continued his Hadīth lessons. The person went to the opposite wall, sat down and leaned his back against it. While teaching, Hadrat looked at the person a few times and continued addressing the students. Before Hadrat could complete his lessons, the person got up smiling and departed. In his happiness, he forgot to offer *salām*. After he departed, one of the students asked: "Hadrat, who was this person and what ailment did he have?" He replied: "He was suffering from a *Qabs* (constriction)."³⁰ *Al-hamdulillāh*, it has been cured. He was so happy that he even forgot to offer *salām* when he left."

There was a *buzurg* who was always engaged in *dhikr* and *shughl*. He had developed a habit of falling asleep between the *maghrib* and '*ishā salāh*. He tried to get rid of this habit, but before '*ishā* drowsiness would overcome him and he would fall asleep without being able to prevent himself from doing so. He used to consider the disapproval of this habit – as is mentioned in the Hadīth. Furthermore, there was always the possibility that the desirable time of '*ishā* would expire or, at least, that it might cause him to be lethargic during '*ishā*. He would try his utmost not to fall asleep, but sleep would inevitably overcome him.

³⁰ *Qabs* is a spiritual condition of stagnation or descent due to which a person experiences a sense of utter uselessness and worthlessness in the Court of *Allāh*. This causes him to repent and it removes arrogance and pride. However, if he is not under the supervision of an adept spiritual guide (Shaykh), or attached to him, it leads to depression. In some cases major depression and suicidal thoughts will afflict him. The opposite of *Qabs* is *Bast* (ascent) or spiritual expansion. [Khanqah Sheikh Zakariyya.]

Eventually he decided to go to Gangoh. By the time he reached there, the *maghrib* congregation had already ended and Hadrat had gone to his house. He sat on the bed under the canopy, turned his back towards the street and, as per his habit, he fell asleep. He had a dream in which he saw Hadrat coming from his house. Hadrat kicked him on his back, and in an angry tone he said: "What nonsensical actions are these! Is this the time to sleep? It is in contradiction to the Hadīth!"

His eyes opened suddenly. He looked around, but there was no one in sight. He thought that Hadrat had already returned from his house and proceeded to the *khānqāh*. He went to search for him in the *khānqāh*, but was told that he had not returned from his house as yet. He felt that his dream had merely been a thought, and thus he returned to the bed and lay down. This time he tried hard to fall asleep, but he couldn't. A short while later Hadrat returned. He got up and presented himself before him. After that day, he never fell asleep between the *maghrib* and '*ishā ṣalāh*' again. Even if he were to lie down, his concern for the '*ishā ṣalāh*' would make him restless. He would constantly change his position, but would never fall asleep until he had completed performing the '*ishā ṣalāh*'.

Hakīm 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib – the owner of Dawā Khānah Fayḍ-e-Am – was about thirteen years old when he left Bhopal to meet Hadrat. Hadrat had just performed *wuḍū'* for the '*asr ṣalāh*' and was walking towards the Musjid. Hadrat addressed him directly saying: "Abd ar-Rahīm, come! We will perform our *ṣalāh*." He also performed his *wuḍū'* and joined the congregation. Ever since that day he developed an intense affinity with *ṣalāh* and would remain restless until he performed it. If he missed his *ṣalāh* on any day, he would express extreme regret – as if a great bounty had been snatched away from him.

A *dhākir shāghil* (one engaged in *dhikr* and spiritual practices) used to remain in Hadrat's service. His food was provided by a particular

person in the locality, and he used to lead the people in salāh in the Musjid. Shaytān constantly hounds every Muslim. This person had developed a relationship with a woman and it reached the point where they had made an appointment to meet. A Shaytānic act is not exposed to others. Thus, no one was aware of the devious plot which Shaytān had conspired during the course of their normal daily activities. On the night of the appointment, this person completed massaging Hadrat's legs and, when he thought Hadrat was asleep, he left the *khānqāh* silently. It was a clear night. He had hardly taken a few steps when dark clouds gathered in the sky. The clouds became darker and denser with every step he took. Eventually he reached the house where he was to meet the woman. As per her promise, she was waiting outside. Before either of them could utter a word, the clouds burst forth with a thunderous sound – terrifying both of them. The woman fled out of fear that her family members would wake up and find he gone. This person also fled for fear of Hadrat because his bed was laid outside and he was the one who slept nearest to Hadrat. If Hadrat were to call for him, [and find him gone], it would be to his detriment. He returned without fulfilling his objective and reached the *khānqāh*, gasping for breath. The moment he stepped inside, the sky turned clear once again. He proceeded silently towards Hadrat, peeped at him and found him sitting crossed legged upon his bed with his head in his hands – as though he was deep in thought. The person went silently towards his bed. It had been laid under the wild-fig tree, a short distance from Hadrat's bed. When he reached his bed, Hadrat raised his head and lay down.

The following morning Hadrat advised him indirectly. He explained the merits of controlling one's self (*nafs*) at times of tests and tribulations. Upon hearing these few words, the person was overcome by remorse. Whenever he thought of his sin, he would be reduced to tears and would cry out to Allāh ﷻ seeking His forgiveness. Within a few months Allāh ﷻ blessed him with *nisbat* and he returned home as a *mujāz-e-Tarīqah* (*khalīfah*).

Without doubt, every single one of Hadrat's *khādims* had received a share of his blessings, and the effect of his *taṣarruṣāt* was certainly felt by each one at some time or the other. Some of them perceived it while others did not. Some of them realized that it had been an outside power which had prevented them from sinning or urged them towards obedience. Others did not realize it, considered it to be a coincidence, and remained oblivious to his spirituality.

I cannot relate even one tenth of the incidents which are known to people. The truth of the matter is that it was essential for his heart to possess the strength that this lofty position required of him – a strength of heart which could bind groups upon groups of people in one bond. The responsibility of instruction and purification which had been placed upon him, required the capability and qualification to singularly control those who were near, those who were distant, juniors and seniors. There were many from amongst his *murīds* who could not derive any benefit from other eminent places.

Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib used to relate: "Maulwī Manzūr Aḥmad Sāhib was an 'ālim who had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was leaving for *hajj*, and I was to join him on the that journey. Coincidentally, we were seated on the same camel. Along the way he started relating his condition to me. He said: 'After pledging *bay'ah* to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, I started *dhikr wa shughl* and, within a few days, I acquired a certain condition. It remained with me for a few days and then it disappeared. My heart is now pining for that condition. I have presented myself before most of the *buzurghs* with the same intention, but that condition is not returning.' Offhandedly I replied: 'If you get the opportunity, you must go and sit in our Hadrat's company.'"

Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad continues: "I did not have the slightest inkling as to whether my words had settled in his heart, nor did I know whether he would even get an opportunity to go to Gangoh

upon his return to India. I returned after performing hajj and Maulwī Manzūr Aḥmad remained behind [in Arabia]. Look at Allāh's Power! Hadrat Imām Rabbānī departed for hajj that following year, and Maulwī Manzūr Aḥmad Sāhib had the opportunity to meet him. He went to Hadrat, related his entire story to him and added: 'Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib had told me to sit in your company and see what happens.' Hadrat smiled and said: 'I see.' Within a few days, Maulwī Manzūr Aḥmad Sāhib rejoiced and said: 'I found what I had been seeking for. In fact, I found much more than that.'"

There are countless incidents of this nature. How many can I relate? In short, Hadrat's presence was a source of Allāh's Mercy during his era, and through him many were bestowed with both external and spiritual blessings. Everyone benefited from him according to their personal capabilities.

*O you, who is like the rainwater of spring,
how can a mere flower thank you?
Whether it is a thorn
or a fragrant, beautiful flower ...
Both are from the sea of your beneficence (fuyūdh).
Both are a favour unto me,
even though I may not perceive it.*

Together with his lofty position in the field of training and tutoring (*tarbiyah*), his acceptance [in the Court of Allāh] was plainly visible and needs no further explanation. The fruit of his acceptance was that anyone who aligned himself to his court – whether through action or conviction – never departed empty-handed. If any Muslim merely had love for him, he was bestowed with treasures which he would not have acquired – even if he were to spend several years in the company of someone else. Imām Rabbānī may have departed from this world, but his *taṣarrufāt* still continues to have an effect. The garden which he came to nurture has become absolutely green

and lush and – *inshā Allāh* – people will continue benefiting from it for many years to come. As for the pure souls who were perfected at his hands ... their practical and academic excellence portrays the power of Hadrat's bestowal. The spiritual influences (*taṣarruṣāt bāṭiniyyah*) with which Allāh ﷻ had endowed Hadrat's *khulafā'* has made them living examples of Imām Rabbānī's *taṣarruṣāt* and – *inshā Allāh* – it will remain for years to come.

I have mentioned previously that this subject was dependent upon [spiritual] inclination and perception. Obviously, things which cross the heart can only be learnt from the heart. The tongue is not able to convey them. Therefore, whatever I have written on this subject would certainly be incomplete. When I look at Hadrat's associates today, I find myself to be the lowest amongst them. But, if I were to say that I was completely deprived, it would amount to ingratitude. I am definitely filled with sins, but – *al-ḥamdulillāh* – by virtue of my affiliation with the Gangohī court, I certainly have a certain measure of affinity with the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Although I may not always have the *taufīq* (inspiration) to emulate the Sunnah, my heart desires to kiss the feet of those blessed souls who emulate the Sunnah. This worthless servant [the author, Hadrat Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī, here refers to himself] had spent the major portion of his early life embracing *bid'āt* (innovations). If the *taṣarruṣāt* of Imām Rabbānī could bring about this change in me, what can be said about the effect which it had upon others?

The essence of his spiritual *taṣarruṣāt* was the same as the essence of his instruction and tutoring. That is, that the *sālik* must consider the emulation of the Sunnah to be the peak of his objectives. He must follow it – doing everything possible to gain the Pleasure of Allāh. He must abstain from sins and prohibitions, and acquire as much as he can through his engrossment in the acts of obedience and worship.

Al-ḥamdulillāh, there are thirty to thirty-five such personalities

today who have acquired the above objective, and who have reached a level of perfection which has enabled them to convey the same message unto others. They have obtained the lofty position of *nisbat-e-musalsalah* (continuous affinity) and have become *mujāz-e-Tarīqah* – the true deputies (*khulafā'*) of Imām Rabbānī. As for receiving a share of the ability to keep one's focus fixed upon Allāh ﷻ, soundness of the sixth sense, and perception of the heart ... this was acquired by thousands of people. If these people are not able to convey others towards perfection, then they are at least so steadfast that they will, *inshā Allāh*, not easily be swayed by others. Abstention from *bid'āt* and the detestation of *bid'āt* has been firmly embedded in their hearts, and they are not averse to the title of 'Wahhābī' which has been given to them by the enemies of the Sunnah. They are not affected by mockery and criticism because the following Qur'ānic description has been firmly impressed upon their hearts:

لَا يَخَافُونَ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةً لَّائِيَةً

"They do not fear the criticism of critics for the Sake of Allāh."

They are thus true to their objective and steadfast in their *tarīqah*, and they still have the same firmness that they had three years ago when Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was alive.

There are a few people whose condition has changed since Hadrat's demise. The change in their condition has certainly manifested its effects. However, they are very few in number. They are those in whose weak hearts the love for Imām Rabbānī could not be firmly embedded. Consequently, they could not benefit fully from his *taṣarruṣāt* and bestowals. The presence of those who have deviated from the excellent path of Imām Rabbānī is actually also a manifestation of his lofty perfection, since that is a *Sunnat-e-Idtirārī* (a Sunnah derived due to necessity, an involuntary Sunnah). There is no need to name these people who have deviated. Bear in

mind that Imām Rabbānī's ways and opinions are known to all, and his strict adherence to the Sunnah and resolute aversion to prevailing *bid'ah* is also well known to the world. Therefore, the further any person from amongst his associates moves away from the Sunnah, and the closer he draws to *bid'ah*, the more he will be included amongst the *ahl-e-bid'ah* – even if he should claim to be an associate and *khādim* of Imām Rabbānī.

I now conclude this chapter on Imām Rabbānī's *tasarrufāt* with a dream, as related by Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib Sūrātī. It is like a prophetic bequest to all his associates. *Inshā Allāh*, it will prove beneficial:

On the afternoon before Hadrat's demise, Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib was asleep in his room in the *khānqāh*. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī came to him in his dream, passed his hand over his entire body and said: "Ahmad, I am passing my hand over your body and Allāh ﷻ will give you wealth." He said: "Hadrat, I do not want any wealth. Make *du'ā'* for me and keep me with you in the Hereafter." Hadrat replied: "Ahmad, the only person who will be with me in the Hereafter is that person who obeys Allāh ﷻ, emulates Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and practises upon the Sunnah. The person who commits *bid'ah*, disobeys Allāh ﷻ, and abstains from following Rasūlullāh ﷺ will not be with me in the Hereafter – no matter how close he has been to me." Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib's eyes opened after that.

May Allāh ﷻ include you and I amongst this blessed group, and may He resurrect us on the terrifying Day of Resurrection under the flag of Imām Rabbānī.

Allow me to describe to you the Jāmi' Musjid where Imām Rabbānī used to perform his *ṣalāh*. The floor of the Musjid and the rooms in the southern section were the places of seclusion for the *dhākirīn shāghilīn* (those engaged in *dhikr* and other spiritual practices). The grave of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs is in the northern section.

KHULAFĀ'

In this chapter, we intend enumerating only those associates who were granted permission³¹ by Imām Rabbānī – either voluntarily or

³¹ There are a few righteous people and Sunnah-adhering 'ulamā' to whom Hadrat Imām Rabbānī gave permission – whether they asked for such permission or not – to initiate others into repenting (making *taubah*) and to include them into the *Silsilah* (Spiritual Lineage). The 'ulamā' are already permitted by the Sharī'ah to initiate an disbeliever into Islam, or to initiate a Muslim into repentance. It is permissible for them to initiate a person into repentance even if they do not obtain such permission from a Shaykh. However, if it is done with Hadrat's permission, the blessings would certainly increase. Although the rank of these 'ulamā' are not the same as that of the *khulafā'*, their rank is higher than that of the ordinary *murīds* in the righteousness which would spread through them, the benefit which others would derive from them, and the guidance which they will spread. Such 'ulamā' are known as *mujāzīn bay'at-e-taubah* (those who are permitted to initiate others into repentance). For example, Maulwī Allāh Bakhsh Sāhib Meerutī, Maulwī Sirāj al-Haqq Sāhib Deobandī, and some of Hadrat Sayyid Qamīs al-A'zam's children, Pīr Jīyo Muḥammad Ja'far Sāhib Sādhaurwī and others. May Allāh enable us to benefit from them. Maulānā Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib Murādābādī, the present principal of Madrasah Waqfīyyah Bhopal, was a student and devoted *khādim* of Hadrat. He was given permission for *bay'at-e-taubah*. None of Hadrat's other associates spoke to Hadrat in the informal way in which he used to speak and converse. This affectionate tutor-student relationship existed between them since his student days, right up until Hadrat's demise. On one occasion Hadrat said: "Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan is not really a *maulwī*. He is a police officer, an accountant, a lawyer, a landlord, a tailor, a cook and a wrestler. He is a Jack of all trades." On one occasion Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan presented a dim-witted student to Hadrat and said: "Hadrat, commence *Tirmidhī Sharīf* with him. He has a dull and defective mind and he is a student in my *madrasah*. I brought him to you so that you may start him off and then he will be blessed and his mind will open." Hadrat said: "If this is his condition, teach him the Urdu and Persian booklets of *fiqh*." The Maulānā replied: "No Hadrat, start him off with *Tirmidhī Sharīf*." Hadrat smiled and began teaching the student one lesson of *Tirmidhī Sharīf*.

through encouragement, in compliance with Allāh's Order – to teach *sulūk*, provide spiritual treatment, and dictate *adhkār wa ashghāl*, and to whom he had given the instruction to accept *bay'ah* from others who are in search of it so that the true *silsilah* may continue.

Obviously, for as long as some of them were unable to dissociate themselves from their love for position and authority (*hubb-e-jāh*), they were deprived of the blessings of the perfection of *qūwwat-e-qudsīyyah*. For as long as this threat to the soul had not been completely obliterated, they could not be considered as worthy deputies (*khulafā'*) of their Shaykh.

These noble personalities are referred to as *mujāz-e-Tarīqah*. What can be said about their ranks? That aspect, for which people would be prepared to sacrifice all their treasures, was bestowed upon them by Allāh ﷻ without much effort on their part. That item, in acquisition of which a person is prepared to toil for to the bitter end, was given to them by Allāh ﷻ in their laps. The fruit-bearing tree of love for Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ was firmly planted within their hearts. Sincerity and the seeking of Allāh's Pleasure, had made their hearts its permanent abode. What else could they have asked for? The source of this distribution was the *khayr al-qurūn* (the best of eras – the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ), and Rasūlullāh ﷺ was sent into this world to distribute this eternal bounty. Allāh ﷻ then conveyed this trust to whomever He Willed from amongst the deputies of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and this will continue until the Day of Resurrection.

The ranks of the *khulafā'* will differ with regard to their proximity to Allāh ﷻ but this can only be known to those who have the ability

The Maulānā had gone to Bhopal with Hadrat's permission and was earning a hundred rupees a month. He went to Arabia this year to perform *hajj*. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

to identify the different ranks. Thus, efforts to identify who is more superior than the other not only smacks of ignorance, but of pride and haughtiness as well. May Allāh ﷻ protect us from the habit of bothering about who from amongst the *Ahlullāh* is superior and who is not, because this would eventually cause us to belittle them, and lead to the destruction of our *īmān*.

Al-hamdulillāh, even though this group of Imām Rabbānī's associates differ from one another with regard to their natural disposition and temperament, they all consider their love, respect, and connection with him to be the means towards their salvation. These elders, who are known as *mujāz-e-Tarīqah*, have spread out to different parts of India, and they have obliterated themselves to the level of anonymity. That is why we were not able to correctly ascertain the exact number of Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā'*. There are over thirty who are well-known. I am listing them in no specific order. Allāh ﷻ is Witness to the fact that the following sequence is not intended to demonstrate the sequence of their ranks.

1. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Hāfiz al-Maulwī Khalīl Ahmad
Sāhib Ambhetwī

He is the *mudarris-e-awwal* (most senior lecturer) at Madrasah Mazāhir al-'Ulūm, Sahāranpūr. His lineage meets with that of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, a few generations up. Furthermore, his lineage is also directly connected to that of Sayyid Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī *rahimahullāh*. At present, there appears to be no one who preceded him in pledging *bay'ah* to Hadrat. Allāh ﷻ has blessed him with a great share of resemblance to his Shaykh, both in appearance and in character.

During Ramadān 1317 A.H. – while in *i'tikāf* – he had a dream which he related to Hadrat as follows: "Hadrat, while I was in *i'tikāf* (seclusion) I had a dream in which I saw myself busy cutting a musk-melon. I passed slices of it to you. You were eating it with

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relish. I collected the saliva which was dripping from your mouth while you were eating and placed it upon my tongue." Hadrat smiled and said: "You must have realized from this dream that our *nisbat* is one and the same."

In 1296 A.H., when Maulānā [Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib] departed for Makkah Mu'azzamah to perform his second *hajj*, Imām Rabbānī wrote a letter to Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib saying: "Give *ijāzah* to Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad."

A'lā Hadrat was greatly pleased upon seeing Maulānā's condition and, in Muharram 1297 A.H., he blessed him with a letter of *khilāfah* and embellished it with his stamp. With absolute joy A'lā Hadrat removed his blessed turban from his head and placed it upon Maulānā's head. [Upon his return to India], the Maulānā presented both gifts to Imām Rabbānī and said: "I am not worthy of this. All of this is due to your affection." Hadrat said: "Congratulations to you." Hadrat then signed the letter of *khilāfat* and, together with the turban, he handed it back over to him. But, look at his respect: Since then, whenever he would initiate a person into *bay'ah* and instruct him into repentance, he would ask him to say: "I am pledging *bay'ah* to Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib at the hands of Khalīl Aḥmad."

Hadrat had a special love for the Maulānā [Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib]. Maulānā was offered a job in Bhopal in exchange for a monthly wage of a hundred rupees. When he wrote to Hadrat regarding this, Hadrat replied: "I do not want to be separated from my people and I do not want them to be far from me."

With reference to him, Hadrat said: "Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad is everything I am." In one of his letters to the Maulānā, Hadrat quoted the following couplet:

*Would that I could take one lock of your hair to my grave,
so that I can shade my head with it
on the Day of Judgement.*

2. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Mahmūd Hasan Sāhib

He is the *mudarris-e-awwal* at Madrasah 'Āliyah Deoband. He is an 'Uthmānī³² by descent, and well-known throughout the world for his knowledge of Islamic sciences – especially the science of Hadīth. He is considered to be the Bukhārī of his time. He is the embodiment of academic and practical excellence, and a king who has been bestowed with the treasures of Sharī'ah and Tarīqah. He conceals himself [and his high status] to the utmost, making it difficult for even his close associates to come to know about it [his spiritual rank]. He is a special erudite student of Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī] rahimahullāh. Several thousand 'ulamā'-e-Muhaddithīn (Hadīth scholars) have already qualified under his tutelage. At present, if we were to give the title of *ustād al-kul* (the teacher of teachers) to anyone in India, it would certainly be given to him.

We learn the lessons of self-effacement and humility from his every step, every movement, and every moment of inactivity. This is why he generally prevented himself from accepting *bay'ah* from anyone. However, no matter how hard we try to conceal the beauty of a jewel, or suppress the fragrance of musk, its beauty and fragrance will certainly manifest itself. Many seekers aligned themselves to him, and are continually imbibing external and internal bounties from him.

Bearing in mind the fact that he also had a strong bond with

³² From the progeny of Hadrat 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ؓ, the third caliph of Islam.

Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī] *rahimahullāh*, he has derived *nisbat* from both suns of guidance [Ḥadrat Nānautwī and Imām Rabbānī]. For many years the Maulānā had the habit of walking from Deoband to Gangoh early every Friday morning. He would perform the *jumu'ah salāh* with Imām Rabbānī as the *imām*, and would return to Deoband in the evening so that he could conduct his lessons the following morning. To cover a distance of forty *kaus* [one *kaus* is equal to about two English miles] in one day, every week – and that too, on foot – displays his ardent love and yearning [to be with his Shaykh]. He did not bother about the inevitable fatigue of such a journey. Whenever he presented himself to Ḥadrat, he would enter silently and seat himself like any other ordinary person.

On one occasion Ḥadrat spoke about him in the following terms: "Maulwī Maḥmūd Ḥasan is a store-house of knowledge."

3. Ḥadrat Maulānā al-Ḥāfiz al-Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Rāipūrī

His original hometown is Tigrī, district Anbālah, but he settled down in Rāipūr, district Sahāranpūr, a long time. He combined all excellent qualities. From the time of his birth his heart had been embedded in Ḥadrat's love. I do not know of anyone else who enjoyed this bounty. During the Indian mutiny, a warrant of arrest was issued against A'lā Ḥadrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Imām Rabbānī was on his way to Panjlāsah and stopped over in Tigrī. He was hosted by his [Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm's] father, Rāu Ashraf 'Alī Khān Sāhib. The Maulānā was a three-year-old child at the time. Ḥadrat showed his love for him, passed his hand of affection over his head, and made *du'ā* for him. His bond with Imām Rabbānī commenced immediately and – according to his father – as he progressed in life and heard about Imām Rabbānī's merits, his love for him grew and intensified.

If a heart had never experienced the slightest misconception about the Qutb (star) of the era [Imām Rabbānī], how can we determine the depths of his lofty rank? He attended Gangoh since his childhood, and was infused with Hadrat's tutoring and spiritual bestowal. During his student days in Sahāranpūr, he pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib and became a *sāhib-e-nisbat* and *mujāz-e-Tarīqah*. Even during this period, he would go to Imām Rabbānī with the same love and yearning as before. Although, by the Order of Allāh ﷻ, he had become a *murīd* of someone else, Hadrat maintained the mentor relationship with him which had existed since his youth.

Four years after Shāh Sāhib's demise, Hadrat accepted his *bay'ah* and appointed him as *mujāz-e-Tarīqah* at the same time.

As far as total reliance upon Allāh ﷻ is concerned, the Maulānā was the embodiment of his Shaykh. Although he possessed substantial property in Tigrī and Rāipūr which he had received as inheritance, the properties were utilized by others due to his independence. I have not come across anyone equal to him in his humility and unassuming nature. There was no limit to his hospitality. The extent of his *dastarkhwān* (table cloth) would leave affluent people astounded. There was no limit to his self-effacement and he preferred a life of seclusion.

He had a natural affinity with nature and its intrinsic beauty. This is the reason why he chose to live in the western section of Rāipūr, near the eastern bank of the Jaman river. The peace, tranquillity and beauty which this location provided was like Paradise on earth.

The effect of his acceptance in the Eyes of Allāh was clearly made manifest. This group [who remained in his company] had an affinity with the Naqshbandī bestowal. They lived in the midst of the appealing intonations of the river and the tranquillity of the trees. Their supplications could be heard all around. Every leaf of

this lush village received the morning and evening fragrance of his bestowal and painted a beautiful scene for all to see. His conditions were unique, and the mere thought of them would untie the knots of the heart. However, since he dislikes anyone mentioning them, and since I have been prohibited from doing this, I can write nothing other than:

السَّعِيدُ مَنْ سَعِدَ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ

"The fortunate one is the one who was blessed with fortune in his mother's womb."

*If You think that my heart is unconcerned of Your Heart,
then I do not know what a heart is!
How can I deny that my heart has been affected
[when I experience joy upon Your remembrance
and sorrow upon our separation]?*

4. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Siddīq Ahmad Sāhib Ambhetwī

He is the *mudarris-e-awwal* at Madrasah Fatahpūrī Delhi. He is the paternal cousin of Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib and hails from the same hometown. Allāh ﷻ had blessed him with the natural desire to earn and acquire the same position and rank as that of Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib. This is based upon the verse:

وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

"Let those who wish to compete, compete in this regard."

During their early childhood studies, and again later while they were memorizing the Qur'ān, he was always in the company of Maulānā [Khalīl Ahmad]. In like manner, he joined Maulānā in pledging *bay'ah* to Imām Rabbānī and eventually also in becoming

a sāhib-e-nisbat and mujāz-e-Tarīqah.

He was a person who experienced lofty conditions and received unique inspirations. The effulgence, expositions and inspirations which he experienced during the course of his journey in *sulūk* were exhaustive, and in all probability not experienced by any of Imām Rabbānī's other *khulafā'*. One single merit of his is equal to thousands of other merits – when Imām Rabbānī initiated him as a *mujāz* (*khalīfah*), he gave him the turban which A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib had given to him when he was initiated as A'lā Hadrat's *khalīfah*. Up until that point, Imām Rabbānī had kept it well preserved. This was a bounty which – like his inspirations – was unique and peculiar to him.

I have a close bond and contact with all four [of the above-mentioned personalities]. The academic and practical merits of each one are beyond description. Since the sequence which I had followed in drawing up this list is not based upon their merits and excellences, I listed them as their names came to mind. The truth of the matter is that I consider each one of them to be the first on the list. Had it been possible in this biography, I would have drawn a circle with Imām Rabbānī at the centre and the names of all four these personalities surrounding it. In that way, it would have clearly illustrated that each one was exactly the same distance from the centre, and that each one was equal to the other in his bond and *nisbat* with the centre. Neither does one of them surpass the others nor is he surpassed by the others.

He sent numerous letters to Hadrat, containing the downpour of inspirations and good dreams which he had experienced. Hadrat collected these so that it may be of benefit to others and become *bāqiyāt-e-sālihāt* (deeds of enduring effect) in the science of *sulūk*. When Hadrat lost his eyesight, the collection of letters were returned to him. Twenty-five of Hadrat's replies to these letters are published in *Makātib Rashīdiyyah*. The original collection is with

Maulānā and he alone can truly appreciate this treasure. However, any person who has an affinity with this science will find value in it.

5. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muhammad Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī

He had pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim al-'Ulūm [Nānautwī] Sāhib rahimahullāh who, in turn, had sent him to Imām Rabbānī. He studied Hadīth under Hadrat's tutelage, and progressed in his spiritual court. As a result of this, he acquired *nisbat* and *ijāzat-e-Tarīqah*. He is the only one from amongst Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā'* who was endowed with *nisbat-e-wajdī* (a bond, accompanied by a trance-like condition). His entire body was immersed in enthusiasm, yearning and longing. In compliance with his Shaykh's orders, he used to accept *bay'ah* from other seekers – even while Hadrat was alive. He would initiate them into *dhikr* and *shughl* and thereby he became a means for the proliferation of the *silsilah*. As his associates proved capable, he would present them to Hadrat. Hearing about the conditions of his spiritual grandchildren would please Imām Rabbānī greatly and he would make abundant *du'ā'* for them.

Most of his associates can be found in the Gwalior region. Some of them also received permission from Hadrat to accept *bay'ah*. One of them is Maulānā Qāsim 'Alī Sāhib. A father is considered very fortunate if he is able to see his grandchildren while he is alive. As far as I know, Maulānā [Muhammad Raushan Khān Sāhib] is probably the only one of Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā'* who had his own *khulafā'* while Imām Rabbānī was still alive and in whom he was able to see the capability of perpetuating the 'progeny'. We have witnessed the Maulānā after acquiring *nisbat* from Imām Rabbānī, turning disbelievers into *Ahlullāh*, and perpetuating this *nisbat* during Imām Rabbānī's lifetime.

6. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Muhammad Siddīq Sāhib
Muhājir Madanī

His first place of residence was Haddādpūr, district Faydābād. He was a Husaynī Sayyid³³ by descent. After eighteen or nineteen generations of his family had lived in India, he and his father – Maulwī Habībullāh Sāhib, who was a *khalīfah* of Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganjmurādābādī rahimahullāh – emigrated to Madīnah in 1316 A.H.

In 1313 A.H., after completing his studies in Deoband, he pledged *bay'ah* to Imām Rabbānī and spent several years in striving and spiritual exercises (*mujāhadah* and *riyādat-e-nafs*). He was overcome with yearning [for his Shaykh] and thus, without informing his family, he left for Gangoh in 1318 A.H. He acquired *nisbat* and enjoyed the daily pleasure of crying and beseeching Allāh ﷻ.

What can we say about his patience and steadfastness? Every Muslim is fully aware of the ascetic life of the people of Madīnah. He was put through several tests when he was summoned to India but, once he displayed his steadfastness, there was nothing that could separate him from the court of Muḥammad ﷺ [Madīnah]. He currently conducts lessons in the Haram and has been blessed with the bounty of self-sufficiency.

7. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Husayn Ahmad Sāhib
Muhājir Madanī

He is the younger brother of Maulānā Muḥammad Siddīq Sāhib. He completed his studies in the Sharī'ah in Deoband, together with his elder brother. In 1316 A.H., when his father decided to emigrate to

³³ Descendant of Hadrat Husayn ؑ.

Madīnah, he pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat, after which he accompanied his father and brothers and settled in Madīnah. When he went to Makkah Mu'azzamah, he made *rujū'* (reverted) to A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib – as per the instruction of Imām Rabbānī – and adhered strictly to the different *adhkār* (plural of *dhikr*) which he taught him.

All the unique experiences and inspirations he received during those days would be conveyed to Imām Rabbānī in Gangoh. In 1318 A.H. he received a letter from Hadrat saying: "It would be good if you could come to Gangoh for a few days." Upon receiving this invitation, he made preparations to leave for India – despite his poverty and lack of resources. His father felt that it would be best if one of his brothers accompanied him. His younger brother, Maulwī Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib, had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat a few months prior, and was overcome with yearning to meet Hadrat. He presented some excuse to his father regarding certain 'necessities' which he needed to fulfil and, in this way, he was able to obtain his father's permission. However, fate had willed something else for him. The elder brother, Maulānā Muḥammad Siddīq Sāhib, had made secret arrangements and, unbeknown to anyone, he had departed a few days earlier. The others only came to know of his departure twelve hours later. Maulwī Sayyid Ahmad Sāhib had to cancel his trip, and Maulwī Husayn Ahmad Sāhib departed alone.

The two brothers met in Jeddah and, after completing their *hajj*, they proceeded to Gangoh. A few days after their arrival, Hadrat presented each one of them with a set of his own clothes – a *kurtah* and a pair of pants. There was no hat [toppi] or turban with these sets. In a hushed tone, one of the brothers said to Hadrat: "If you permit us, we will both present our turbans to Hadrat and Hadrat can then give them to us with his blessed hands." Hadrat remained silent and the two brothers – out of respect – placed Hadrat's gift against their eyes and head, thanked him and left. A few days later, both brothers were summoned and instructed to come with their

turbans. When they presented themselves with their turbans, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī tied the turbans around their heads with his blessed hands and said: "Do you have any idea what this is?" In a hushed tone Maulwī Siddīq Aḥmad Sāhib said: "*Dastār-e-faḍīlat* ('ālim qualification turban)." Hadrat said: "*Dastār-e-khilāfat* (turban denoting your appointment as my *khalīfah*)."

From amongst all Hadrat's *khulafā'*, these are the only two examples where he conferred both physical and verbal *khilāfah*. Their academic and practical merits are obvious and can be gauged from the fact that they are the neighbours of Rasūlullāh ﷺ [because they are living in Madīnah]. The lessons which Maulānā Husayn Aḥmad Sāhib conducts in the Haram-e-Nabawī are very popular. Allāh ﷻ has also blessed him with honour – to such an extent that even the '*ulamā'*' of Yemen, Syria and Madīnah do not enjoy such honour and fame, let alone the '*ulamā'*' of India. This is the Bounty of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows to whomever He Wills.

He was extremely hospitable, modest and bashful and possessed many other excellent qualities which left onlookers astounded.

8. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Hakīm Maulwī Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib Nahtaurī

He was a student of Imām Rabbānī and also his *mujāz-e-Tarīqah khalīfah*. He prefers to conceal his position and therefore cannot tolerate the exposure of his high rank. He is extremely soft-hearted by nature. Whenever he sees Hadrat's mementos he becomes restless, and whenever he sees Hadrat's senior *khulafā'* he starts to cry.

He is very humble, modest, good-natured, jovial, informal, kind to the poor, patient and grateful. Besides this, he possesses other good qualities as well. He resides in the lofty Musjid of Tīlī Wāra Mahalla, Sadr Bazaar, Delhi. He conducts lessons there solely for

Allāh's Pleasure, and is content with the twenty rupees which he receives monthly from Hājī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib – a trader by occupation, and one of Ḥadrat's devoted *khādims*.

I [the author, 'Āshiq Ilāhī] know the above eight personalities quite well and was therefore able to write something about them. However, I have not met the other *khulafā'* as yet. That is why I will only mention their names:

(9) Maulānā al-Hāfiz Muḥammad Sālih Sāhib (Nakaudar, district Jālandar), (10) Maulānā Qudratullāh Sāhib Murādābādī, (11) Maulānā 'Abd as-Samad Saunīpattī, (12) Maulānā Hakīm Muḥammad Siddiq Sāhib Murādābādī, (13) Hāfiz Muḥammad Yāsīn Sāhib Nagīnwī, (14) Maulānā Siddiq Aḥmad Sāhib Kāndhlawī, (15) Hāj Naṣīr al-Haqq Sāhib Kāndhlawī, (16) Maulānā Muḥammad Ikrām Sāhib (Garsāhe), (17) Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffūr Sāhib Jaipūrī, (18) Maulānā Mukhlis ar-Raḥmān Sāhib Bengālī, (19) Maulānā Ramīd Aḥmad Sāhib Bengālī, (20) Maulānā Damīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Bengālī, (21) Qārī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib Bengālī, (22) Maulānā 'Abd al-Bārī Sāhib Bengālī, (23) Maulānā 'Abd al-Latīf Sāhib Bengālī. *May Allāh ﷻ enable us to take benefit from their long lives.*

Six of Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā'* have passed away. They are:

(24) Ḥadrat Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn *rahimahullāh*. He passed away in Makkah Mukarramah in Muḥarram 1324 A.H. – a month after his Shaykh's demise, and is buried in Jannatul Mu'allā. (25) Maulānā Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib Nānautwī, (26) Ḥadrat Maulānā Dā'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib Gangohī, (27) Maulānā Qādir 'Alī Sāhib Dehlawī, (28) Maulānā Hāfiz 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Sāhib Paurabī, (29) Maulānā Bahā' ad-Dīn Sāhib Kābulī. *May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon all of them.*

(30) We are quite sure that Ḥadrat Maulānā Hāfiz Qamar ad-Dīn Sāhib – the *imām* of the Jāmi' Musjid in Sahāranpūr – is Ḥadrat

Imām Rabbānī's *mujāz khalīfah*. However, he prefers to conceal his rank. Nonetheless, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib has certainly given him permission to accept *bay'ah*.

(31) Although Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Mughīth ad-Dīn Sāhib Dhaurwī fully conceals his rank, he is certainly Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's khalīfah. That is why I cannot omit making mention of him. He is a person of lofty condition and rank. The areas of Punjab – especially Ambālah – are flourishing spiritually due to his bestowal and blessings. The tongue and pen of this worthless author [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] does not have the ability to describe his excellent life and conditions. The only reason why I mentioned him last was so that it could augur well for my last moments in this world. If only I could get a flicker of the bounty which he has been endowed with – and this is certainly not Difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

There are probably other personalities who are *khulafā'* of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, but I do not have any knowledge of them because they have chosen to conceal their rank. That is the reason why they are not mentioned in this biography. Since it is essential to be cautious in this regard, I have listed the names of those whose *ijāzah* has been established with certainty. I did not rely upon instinct or circumstantial evidence.

Although Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Kāndhlawī was a devoted and special *khādim*, I do not know whether or not he was ever initiated as a *mujāz* of Imām Rabbānī. That is why I did not include him in the above list. Yes, he was certainly initiated last year as a *mujāz* of Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib.

It is beyond my ability to list the thousands who benefited from Hadrat. Thus I cannot say anything more. May Allāh ﷻ bless them all in their deeds and conditions.

SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCES

*The one who did not recognise
the perfection of the Auliya' (friends of Allāh),
did not recognise a priceless, special bounty and virtue.*

*Thus he will not be grateful for it,
nor will he be inclined towards loving them.*

*In this case it could be said with certainty
that he did not recognise Allāh!*

In the previous pages I have provided the reader with many examples on this subject. In order to draw specific attention to it, I will now add more details in this regard:

When the time arrives for every progressive thing to reach its stage of perfection, it displays a special condition and state. Once it reaches this stage, the results of it are made manifest. For example: The perfection of fruit lies in it becoming fully ripened and worthy of being eaten. The perfection of the intellect lies in its ability to distinguish right from wrong so that it may safeguard itself against error. Only then is the person able to lead a comfortable life after following the correct course. Perfection in knowledge means that it must be firmly established and entrenched. It must be able to differentiate between truth and falsehood at all times and under all circumstances so that – by virtue of following the truth and abstaining from falsehood – that which is known can be put into practice. In like manner, *Dīn* and *ma'rifat-e-Ilāhīyyah* (true recognition of Allāh ﷻ) – known as *īmān* and *tarīqah* – also have a special condition and state known as a 'state of perfection'. This is what I mean by the title *ma'nawī kamāl* (spiritual excellences). The effect of it is created in a believer's heart and it can be perceived through insight. However, the signs and indications thereof become apparent on the physical body and can be seen with our physical eyes – provided the viewer considers the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ to be the tool for its identification, and the criterion for its

acceptance or rejection.

Perfection in *ma'rifat-e-Ilāhī* means that an intrinsic knowledge of the Essence and Attributes of Allāh ﷻ should become manifest and visibly apparent. The person must submit completely to the *jalāl* (Authority) and *jamāl* (Beauty and Excellence) of Allāh ﷻ, as well as His attributes of Mercy and Anger. Together with *īmān* in Allāh's Existence and in His Divine Power, the person must attest to the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. Once he has done this, he must possess such conviction in Allāh's Pleasure, Wrath, Reward and Punishment that it would enable him to have a yearning for obedience and an aversion for sinning. This should be followed by a love for the Creator and a quest for proximity to Him. He should loathe, and abstain from, anything which would cause the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ.

All excellences of this world are bound to diminish and end. However, *ma'rifat-e-Ilāhīyyah* and the sweetness of *īmān* are intrinsic and essential qualities which, instead of diminishing with the passage of time, only becomes stronger. As time passes, this spiritual excellence increases and progresses. Once it attaches itself to a heart, it will never leave it. When a heart comes to know of its wonderful taste, it has no alternative but to fall in love with it and be enamoured by it. A poet says:

*Allāh ﷻ showers His Mercy upon
the person who has the ailment of love [for Allāh ﷻ].
The more he seeks treatment,
the more his ailment increases.*

When love enters the heart, it is difficult for it to leave. When a heart tastes the sweetness of love, it considers an increase in love for the Beloved to be a panacea [magic potion or cure]. When the lover becomes despondent due to separation and hopes for attachment, the grief and expectation that he experiences becomes a

cause of comfort to him. However, the love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ is an intrinsic and inseparable love because it is the essential and original love. The lover loses his concern for this world and whatever it contains, and becomes totally devoted to this love. He becomes so engrossed in this love that people consider him to be a madman. This is the perfect love which we have been encouraged to acquire according to the following statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

اذكروا الله حتى يقولوا إنه لمجنون

"Engage in Allāh's remembrance to the extent where people refer to you as a madman."

The following statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructs us to obliterate ourselves in the very same self-effacement:

موتوا قبل أن تموتوا

"Die before death comes to you."

The poet says:

تداويت من ليلي بليلى من الهوى — كما يتداوى شارب الخمر بالخم

*I treated my sickness for Laylā with more Laylā
because of my love for her,
just as an alcoholic would treat his sickness [of wine]
with more wine.*

When this love reaches its peak, the heart — which is the abode of this love — becomes a slave of Allāh ﷻ. Such a condition is known as *i'itdāl* (a balanced and equitable condition) and this is what is referred to as the rectitude of the heart. It is this very same

sweetness of *īmān* which causes the person to regard the committing of a sin to be worse than burning in the fire – as has been mentioned in a Hadīth.

Once a love for Allāh ﷻ has been firmly embedded in the heart, it becomes easy to follow the Sunnah, and the different body parts – their movements and moments of inactivity – all become naturally habituated to the Sunnah. The different body parts then actually become the employees and tools of the heart. In short, when strict adherence to the Sharī'ah and following of the Sunnah becomes as natural and spontaneous as breathing, then we will say that it is the fruit of the spiritual excellence which we can see with our eyes and through which we can gauge the purity of the heart.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's steadfastness in following the Sunnah is absolutely clear and apparent. Asking for a proof of it would not only be disrespectful, but tantamount to displaying a lamp before the sun. There are others in this world who have love for the Sunnah, but there are very few who have the root of this love firmly embedded in their hearts. This is the kind of love which we can refer to as self-effacement (*fanā'īyyat*) – the effects of which manifests itself on the body in such a way that the person cannot commit any act against the Sharī'ah – not even by mistake or unintentionally.

The only person who is eligible to become a leader of his people, is the one whom the ruler considers – according to his understanding – to be the most superior and most qualified amongst all his subjects. It is possible for a human to make an error in judgement. However, when the Creator of the universe appoints a sound-hearted person to be the leader and commander amongst the general *auliyā'*, *'ulamā'* and countless people from amongst the masses, it is not possible for his spiritual excellence to be equal to, or less than that of others. Thus, Imām Rabbānī's position as a refuge for people and as the *Qutb al-irshād* (star of guidance and

instruction) of his era, is actually a message through which Allāh ﷻ informs us that he is a unique personality of his time with regard to his steadfastness, and that he is the most superior amongst his contemporaries with regard to his spiritual equilibrium (*qalbī i'tidāl*).

In every era, numerous pure souls from the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ have been attached to following Rasūlullāh ﷺ. In each of their statements and actions, they have considered adherence to the Sharī'ah to be the correct choice and their only means of salvation. However, as far as the intricate subjects of *murā'āt-e-ḥudūd* (full consideration of the limits) and *ḥifẓ-e-marātib* (safeguarding and upholding the ranks) with full determination are concerned, no other person has managed to exceed Imām Rabbānī in the high degree of his excellence.

The term *ḥifẓ-e-marātib* is very concise and vague, and for people like us it is difficult to understand. We can only learn a bit about it through examples, but we can certainly not fathom its practical condition. Out of every century, and from amongst the countless levels and ranks of Muslims, only one person enjoys the position of *mujaddid*. This should be enough for us to gauge how difficult it is to acquire this quality.

Even when a Muslim becomes a beloved of Allāh ﷻ, he is not safe from committing excesses and displaying shortcomings (*ifrāt wa tafrīt*), although – based upon his good intentions – such a defect could be excused. Yet, a weakness is still a weakness, and a defect is still a defect. No matter how deep a *maghlūb al-ḥāl sālik* (person in a state of ecstasy) may be drowning in his love for Allāh ﷻ, he can never reach the rank of the *walī* who is fully conscious, whose condition is upright and balanced, who is between *ifrāt wa tafrīt* with regard to every exemplary quality, and who adheres firmly to the Sunnah at all times and under all circumstances, with full devotion and sincerity.

It is the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ who received the certificate of balance in spiritual excellence and 'safeguarding of limits' with the words:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

"Thus, We made you a balanced nation."

Based upon this, the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ is the best amongst all the past nations:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

"You are the best of nations, selected for the people..."

The perfect example and embodiment of this spiritual excellence was placed in the pure heart of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and, based upon this, he was the most superior amongst all the Prophets ﷺ. From this entire group of pure and innocent souls [the Prophets ﷺ], it is only Muḥammad ﷺ who is unique in this spiritual excellence. His every quality was balanced and there was total equilibrium in his every condition. If he detested anyone for the Sake of Allāh ﷻ, it was on the right occasion and the extent of his hatred was beneficial and appropriate. If he showed kindness and affection to anyone, it was on an appropriate occasion and within a limit which would be beneficial and advantageous.

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ servitude was his special jewel, and the fact that he was the beloved of Allāh ﷻ was his royal crown. Because he possessed this unique spiritual excellence, it was not really necessary for him to be given the ability to display supernatural feats and miracles – such as those displayed by the previous Prophets ﷺ. The fact is that these supernatural feats and miracles were suitable under those circumstances and during those eras. Since miracles are displayed openly, they can be perceived by the

naked eye. On the other hand, spiritual excellences are internal and they can only be perceived through insight. The external miracles are proofs for those who are able to see with the naked eye, whereas spiritual excellences are signs and evidence of superiority for those who possess insight and foresight.

Allāh ﷻ Willed for the external Prophethood of his beloved [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] to be proven to those who had external eyes with which they could perceive these proofs [miracles], and He offered proofs which could not be performed by others – even though it may have been performed in previous times. However, no other previous Prophet and Messenger shared the special spiritual excellence of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – let alone an ordinary person.

In like manner, the *auliyā'* of the *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ are actually the '*ulamā'*', based upon the Hadīth:

علماء امتي كانبيا بني إسرائيل

*"The 'ulamā' of my ummah
are like the Prophets of the Banī Isrā'īl."*

When the '*ulamā'*' assume this deputyship, they are not only his deputies when it comes to conveying his message (*tablīgh*), but – depending upon their internal capabilities and spiritual conditions – they are in the shade of this pure group [Prophets ﷺ]. Consequently, despite the purity of their souls and their love for Allāh ﷻ, they are seen to be overcome by some or other condition. Some of them are overcome by a condition which causes them to discard politics, while others are overcome by hate for the Sake of Allāh (*bughd fī Allāh*) and therefore possess less kindness and mercy. Some are overcome by extreme fear [of Allāh ﷻ] which causes them to have little or no hope, while others are the opposite and are overcome by hope. They possess little, or no fear. Some are immersed in Allāh's Attributes of *Jamāl* (all those attributes

indicating His Compassion and Kindness), while others are immersed in His Attributes of *Jalāl* (all those attributes indicating His Power and Might). Some are overcome by self-effacement, while others are more concerned about organizing and instructing people. Some are overcome by a state of intoxication, while others are dumbfounded by their observation of Creator's creation. Some have become so independent that they recoil from people, while others have so much affection for people that their excessive intermingling with them prevents them from monitoring and controlling their own time. Some are so completely overcome by emotion when looking at Allāh's Creation that the mere sight of a mountain causes them to fall unconscious. Others are absolute embodiments of servitude – ready to carry out every order. They will not hesitate to kill someone if they are ordered to do so, or to destroy or burn someone if they are instructed to do so. They are, as the saying goes "at your beck and call".

A poet says:

*Every flower has a different fragrance.
Each one's shape and appearance is unique.
Look at how blessed and attractive
the garden of Mustafā [Muḥammad ﷺ] is!*

During the last thirteen hundred years, each century certainly gave birth to one sacred soul amongst the '*ulamā*' upon whose head [the crown of] the spirituality of Muḥammad ﷺ was placed, and in whose heart an absolute bond of servitude [with Allāh ﷻ] was firmly embedded. Such a person became the crown of the '*auliyā*' of his time, and the most ardent lover and beloved of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He came into this world as the most devoted follower of the Sunnah, a guide unto the world, a deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and a tutor to the people so that he could rectify the condition of the people of his era.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was born into a tumultuous century which was filled with trials and tribulations. This condition was further

aggravated by the fact that thirteen hundred years had passed since Rasūlullāh's ﷺ departure from this world. Abject weakness had overpowered people's capabilities. Abhorrence of proficient [spiritual] doctors had become common, and the spiritual power to perceive spiritual ailments had disappeared.

Consequently, Hadrat was endowed with a balanced steadfastness, equilibrium and level-headedness that was beyond description. Apart from his desire to emulate the Sunnah, Hadrat was never overcome by any 'condition'. This was in fact the true source of his spiritual excellence. His level-headedness and simplicity reached such a level that it was difficult for those who only looked at the outward and desired to witness miracles (*karāmāt*) to believe that he was a *walī* – let alone the crown of the *awliyā'*, the guide to the world [in his era], and the quintessential Shaykh of his time.

If we were to look at his ordinary actions and daily practices and mark them off against a record [of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ life], we will find that every action of his corresponded with that of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The truth is that – even if we were to do that – we would not be able to give due credit to him. Whatever I have said, and whatever I am going to say in the following pages, will only be acknowledged by the reader who has been endowed with understanding. Such a reader will agree that the fruit of Imām Rabbānī's spiritual excellence was the essential excellence in Islam, in the face of which thousands of *kashf wa karāmāt* (expositions and supernatural feats) are rendered worthless. The person whose heart has not tasted this sweetness, should not even bother to verify it. It would be a useless and futile effort if he should even try.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] writes: "When I decided to go for hajj, I personally went to Hadrat to obtain his permission. Regardless, on the very day of my departure I wrote another letter to him stating: 'This servant is departing today.' I received a reply from him which, amongst other things, contained

the following: 'When you present yourself there [in Makkah] before Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, you must remember me as well.' He followed his statement with this poem:

*When you sit with your beloved
and the vessel of ma'rifat is passed around,
then remember those lovers
who drink from that vessel.*

This was also in emulation of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When Hadrat 'Umar sought permission from Rasūlullāh ﷺ to perform 'umrah, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to him: 'When you go there, do not forget us in your *du'ā*.'"

Maulwī Hakīm Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī wrote a *qasīdah* in Hadrat's praise. Hadrat was very affectionate towards him and they shared quite an informal relationship. Hadrat refused to listen to the *qasīdah*, but he [Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib] compelled him to listen. When he completed reading it, Hadrat bent down, picked up some soil from the ground and threw it onto the Maulwī Sāhib. He said: "Hadrat, my clothes are spoilt." Hadrat said: "This is the recompense for the one who praises another to his face. What can I do, this is Janāb Rasūlullāh's ﷺ order."

On one occasion he [Hadrat] related: "I had been saving money for hajj and had collected about fifty to sixty rupees. Some Muslims started a business partnership (co-operative). I invested my money in this venture. *Māshā Allāh*, they were declared insolvent and I absolved them of the debt of my investment."

A person from Sahāranpūr once came to him and said: "Hadrat, my son is very immoral. My family would like me to distribute all the wealth and property. I have come for your advice. Should I distribute it or not?" Hadrat replied: "No. Do not give anything to anyone while you are alive. If you give it, no one will bother about

you and you will become downtrodden." Hadrat then added: "Immorality is also an illness, and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is sufficient for any illness. Write it on a utensil, rinse it with water and give him its water to drink."

Since this person had come from Sahāranpūr, and *Mazāhir al-'Ulūm* was having its annual *jalsah* at the time, Hadrat asked him: "Did you contribute anything towards *Mazāhir al-'Ulūm's jalsah*?" This poor person did not even attend the *jalsah*. What could he say? He remained silent and, after some time, he said: "Hadrat, I did not attend the *jalsah*." Hadrat was greatly hurt by this reply and the pain was evident on his face. Upon seeing this, the person apologized and said: "Hadrat, I did not have anything to give at the time, that is why I did not go to the *jalsah*." He said: "Miyā! If you did not have anything to give, you should have at least attended. You could have uttered a good word. Do you know the present condition of the *Dīn* of Islam?"

Maulwī Abū an-Naṣr Sāhib's land was adjacent to Hadrat's house. On one occasion he said to Hadrat: "Take the land and attach it to your house. You will be able to extend your house." Hadrat replied: "Bhāi, I have completed my days [I am old now] and I do not need it." To make him happy, Hadrat said: "I am not refusing. Ask Mas'ūd Aḥmad [Hadrat's son] and build something."

One day the discussion revolved around the beliefs of the *pīr zāde*³⁴ of Gangoh. Hadrat mentioned a person's name and said: "He covered the threshold of the Shaykh's grave with a cloth of muslin or some other fabric. A person accidentally stepped onto the threshold, and he became very angry and said: 'O you disrespectful person! Can't you see?' Strangely, the threshold did not even exist during Hadrat Shaykh's time, whereas the room wherein Hadrat

³⁴ The descendants of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.

Shaykh had spent eighteen years in worship was 'valued' so much, that the washer-men's donkeys used to be kept in that room. Hadrat Shaykh's writings lay strewn around with other garbage, and the rats used to urinate on them." With reference to the piece of the Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm which he had in his possession, Hadrat then remarked: "I have an item which Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* would have come to look at if he were still alive."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī really valued *tabarrukāt* (items of blessing). Allāh ﷻ had endowed him with the kind of *tabarrukāt* that could not be found elsewhere. The Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm is something which thousands of visitors to the Haram are even deprived of touching. If they are somehow able to touch it, it is generally through committing the sin of bribing [the guard]. But, Hadrat possessed a piece of the Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm. Whenever his *khādims* requested, Hadrat would remove it from its box, place it in water, remove it from the water, and pass the water to all who were present. Hadrat valued this priceless *tabarruk* so much that he would not hand it over to even his most trusted and reliable *khādims*. Whenever he allowed people to see it, he would glow with joy. Regarding the Qur'ānic instruction: "Speak about the bounties of your Lord", he said the following words on countless occasions: "Allāh ﷻ gave me something which others do not have." Hadrat also had a small piece from the threshold of the Ka'bah. He valued it just as much as he did the piece of Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm – if not more.

Hadrat also had a *jubbah* (cloak) which was given to him by A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. It was also kept in the same box, along with the other *tabarrukāt*. Whenever he removed it from the box, he would first place it in his hands and then place it against his eyes. He would then give it to the others, who would take turns in placing it on top of their heads [as a sign of respect]. A peculiar condition would overcome him, and he would say: "Hadrat wore it for many years and then sent it specifically to me. He sent it with a person, together with the following

instruction: 'You must wear it'. Therefore I wear it occasionally in fulfilment of his instruction." It is a *tabarruk* which he had left behind.

While abstaining from *ifrāt wa tafrīt* (committing excesses and displaying shortcomings), the manner in which Hadrat displayed love, respect, and value for these *tabarrukāt*, and the manner in which he displayed his love for the Haramayn Sharīfayn and his Shaykh was rarely witnessed in others.

Hadrat's generosity was completely concealed. Even his closest *khādims*, who remained with him all the time, only came to know of it on rare occasions. Apart from such times, even his left hand did not know what his right hand had spent. Hadrat took the responsibility upon himself to see to the welfare of the many widows and orphans in his extended family. He did it in such a manner that they never had the fear that their condition of poverty and need would become known to others.

In order to maintain family ties, it is necessary that one should have knowledge regarding your kith and kin. This is known as *'ilm al-ansāb* (knowledge of lineages). We often witnessed Hadrat talking about several generations of his lineage – thereby showing his kinship with distant relatives. They probably never knew that they were related to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, but Hadrat would say: "He is the son of so and so, who is the son of so and so, and he is related to me via so many links."

Although his grandfather had left Rāmpūr, Hadrat knew the names of all his relatives and extended family in Rāmpūr. Whenever any relative came from Rāmpūr to Gangoh – no matter how remotely related he may have been – Hadrat would experience a special joy upon meeting him and show sincere concern for him.

When it came to his kindness and treatment of people, Hadrat's

habit was extremely balanced and exemplary. He was neither miserly nor extravagant. On one occasion he related: "When our caravan left for Makkah Mu'azzamah to perform our second hajj, Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Hadrat Nānautwī] got into the habit of bringing a few people to join us in our meal. He would do this every day without fail. The others remained hungry, so I said: 'Each one must cook his own food.' After some time, Maulwī [Qāsim] Sāhib fell very ill. He called me in privacy and said: 'I have no hope of surviving, and I have debts amounting to seven hundred rupees. If I pass away, you must pay this money on my behalf. I do not expect anyone other than you to pay it on my behalf.' I said: 'Very well Hadrat.' I paid the money immediately. He recovered and returned [to India] with us." Hadrat did not mention whether he ever recovered the money from the Maulānā or not.

Hadrat lived an ascetic life and was totally aloof from the means of earning a living. This was an example of the manner in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ had spent his life, and it is known to all. Hadrat did not even have a hint of desire or greed for wealth. This is known as *zuhd* (abstention). It would be difficult to find someone who equalled him in this balanced state of *zuhd*. Before accepting the *bay'ah* of the governess of Bhopal, he stipulated the condition that she should not engage in any monetary dealings with him. How can we even imagine that he would consider accepting anything from his general associates?

On one occasion, the discussion revolved around medicine. He said: "I have not seen anyone getting cured from ulceration of the lungs – except at one place." He then mentioned the name of Pīrjī Nūr al-Hasan Gangohī and said: "He was living on Nāhin mountain and fell critically ill. Some people went to fetch him, but the doctors in the area said that he would die while descending the mountain. Nevertheless, he was eventually brought to Gangoh. I started treating him and used to visit him regularly. The place

became infested with lice, even though all the utensils were removed and the place was cleaned. Regardless, a stench still emanated from the place. He was eventually cured and he found employment in Patyālah. One of the Rajah's relatives suffered from the same illness. He wrote to me saying: 'Come here, you will benefit tremendously [monetarily].' I wrote to him saying: 'I cast aside such benefits. If the patient wishes, he may come here and I will treat him to the best of my ability.'

A poet says:

O you ascetic!

Do you know what zuhd [abstinence] and piety is?

*It means that you should not hanker
after the riches of the kings and rulers.*

Hadrat's level of humility and modesty was such that, if his talk or lecture portrayed his excellence in any way, he would immediately refute it and deny having anything to do with it. On one occasion he was talking about the patched garment of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. He said: "It remained on his body for fifty years." Then he added: "Hadrat Shaykh and Shaykh Jalāl Thānesarī used to live in this very room. There was a wall in-between. Such was the abject poverty of these people – and now this room is filled with the chattels of this world."

It was probably around the time when a war was being waged in the Sarhad (border) area. After the 'ishā *salāh*, Hadrat was lying on his bed with a light quilt covering him. A few *khādims* were massaging his legs. One of the students, who was quite informal, asked: "Hadrat, what do you think will be the outcome of this fighting?" Hadrat responded in a harsh tone: "How should I know? I cannot even see your face through this quilt."

It was Hadrat's natural habit to give due consideration to the *Dīn* of Islam and to distinguish between the ranks of Muslims and

disbelievers. It was around 'asr time when he was sitting on his bed in the courtyard. Another bed had been placed in front of his, and his *khādim* – Munshī Tafaddul Husayn Sāhib – was sitting at the foot end of the bed. Hadrat was reading *tasbīh* when he suddenly said to Munshī Sāhib: "Sit at the head end." He considered this to be quite formal, and out of respect for Hadrat, he said: "Hadrat, I am seated quite comfortably." In a firm tone – emphasizing his instruction – Hadrat repeated: "Sit at the head end." Munshī Sāhib had no option but to carry out his order. A few minutes later, a Hindu banker arrived, followed by his attendant. The attendant had a platter of sweetmeats on his head, and possibly some money as well. When he appeared before Hadrat, he bowed slightly and offered *salām*. The banker waited for permission to be seated but was not offered a seat. He was still standing when Hadrat asked him: "Lālah! Is your daughter okay?" he replied: "By virtue of Hadrat, she is totally healthy. Out of happiness for her good health, I brought some sweetmeats for the *khādims*." Hadrat replied: "There is no need for that." I do not know whether Hadrat sent the sweetmeats back or whether he distributed it amongst the students. Munshī Tafaddul Husayn Sāhib says: "It was only then that I realized why Hadrat had asked me to move away from the foot end and to sit at the head end."

One cannot help feeling astounded when studying Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's biography, and one feels especially astounded upon noting his level of steadfastness. Allāh ﷻ had endowed him with steadfastness right from the beginning – yet it is something which is normally acquired gradually over a period of time. When we study the lives of the righteous servants of Allāh ﷻ, we will notice that they slowly started to progress after they had taken their first step in their quest of proximity to Allāh ﷻ. They certainly received a certain share of that which was destined for them. Thereafter they made gradual progress, started to attain higher ranks, and eventually – after having developed a natural attraction towards good deeds – they acquired *nisbat*. This natural attraction towards

good deeds is like a person's natural liking for certain foods, or a natural aversion towards sinning, or like the natural dislike of filth and dirt. This *nisbat* is the actual fruit of love for Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Thereafter they were endowed with steadfastness in this condition. This was followed by a condition wherein they would remain engrossed in their contentment, and no matter how much the conditions of the fleeting world would change, it would not disturb them in the least.

Through Allāh's ﷻ Limitless Bounty, this condition was bestowed upon Hadrat Imām Rabbānī from the very beginning, and not after many years of striving. It is therefore difficult to look for new incidents in his life which would please the reader. Due to his balanced condition, as well as the steadfastness and stability of his sound heart, his entire biography has been restricted to this one fact: His adherence to a strict time table, consistency in his *ma'mulāt*, and his emulation of the Sunnah had remained constant and stable from beginning to end. There was never any change in his personal external conditions nor did he add anything new. During the same period when changes took place in others and they were due for ascension – as per the Qur'ānic instruction: "*You will certainly have to ascend step by step*", Imām Rabbānī remained the same and continued with the same steadfastness which he had already acquired. During this time he remained constant in following the Sunnah. Day after day, nay, moment by moment his spiritual progress reached heights known to none but Allāh ﷻ. This progress can only be discerned through insight [and not with the naked eye].

I can say nothing more than this: Imām Rabbānī's heart was physically and naturally predisposed to Allāh's ﷻ Love and to being His Beloved. He was sent into this world during this century to demonstrate the practical way of following the Rasūl of Allāh ﷻ. All the incidents that have been related are merely subsidiary to this fundamental fact – even though the topics may differ and the conditions may have been explained differently. The meaning

remains the same, regardless of the diversity in its outward appearance.

His vigilance, caution and his adherence to the system of cause and effect which the Creator has established in this world are the unique qualities which conveyed him to the highest stages of servitude. An Arab once came to meet him. Hadrat did not permit him to remain in the *khānqāh*. He went around town complaining about Hadrat and hurling abuses at him. This person was so convincing, that even some of Hadrat's *khādims* started questioning why Hadrat was treating this person in such a manner. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī came to know of the *khādim's* whisperings. Since it was essential to rectify the seeker, Hadrat included the following statement in one of his discussions: "Narayan Singh, the former inspector of Gangoh, had warned me to be extremely cautious of Arabs, foreigners, outspoken *maulwīs*, and unknown outsiders. He told me that these people were generally spies or secret police. Once we found some documentation in this regard on an Arab. I am therefore very cautious of these people and do not permit them to stay over in the *khānqāh*. That is why I did not permit Ismā'īl [the Arab] to stay here." Someone then commented: "Hadrat, I heard that Ismā'īl was complaining about you." Hadrat replied: "Very well. Why should we fear anyone's complaints?"

When man learns about the inhabitants of this world while living in this world, he remains on guard and becomes more experienced. Rasūlullāh's ﷺ kindness was not restricted to providing instruction on the basis of *Dīn*. He also showed the way to live peacefully in this world. That is why the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷺ, who benefited from Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *nisbat*, were not unmindful of these precautions and were wary of those who could make their lives in this world somewhat uncomfortable.

Sultān Habībullāh Khān, the governor of Afghanistan, once sent his trade ambassador from Peshawar with five thousand rupees as a gift

to Hadrat. After enduring much hardship, the ambassador traversed the rough road from Sahāranpūr to Gangoh and presented himself before Hadrat. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not accept the gift, nor did he permit the ambassador to stay in the *khānqāh*. Yes, he did permit him to read the letter [from the governor] and he did listen to it. It contained the following: "I am presenting five thousand rupees to your respected self. The same amount will be presented to your lofty court every year. Kindly accept it. The only thing which I ask in return is your *du'ā's*."

The fact that Hadrat did not host the respected ambassador in the *khānqāh* was a cause of surprise and regret to most of the *khādims*. Only Hadrat was aware of the underlying reasons and wisdom behind this, but it seemed that one of the reasons was that – had he accepted the gift – it would have accorded the enemy an opportunity to inform the government and to accuse him of mutiny. It is difficult for a *Dīnī* authority to maintain a sincere relationship with a worldly king. Exposing such a relationship could be a cause of harm. If nothing else, it would certainly have affected the many occupations that Hadrat was engrossed in within the privacy of his private room in Gangoh. Consequently, Hadrat said to some of his *khādims*: "The attachment which the heart has to Islam or the Islamic ruler is obvious. However, accepting his gift could have caused many harms. I could have borne those harms, but I do not know what harms and calamities would have befallen my people [my associates] and what suspicions would have been aroused against them."

When the ambassador decided to depart the following day, he came to Hadrat to bid farewell to him and made this request: "The *amīr* will not believe that I came to Gangoh and that Hadrat had refused the gift. He will think I remained at home and concocted this story. I therefore request that you write me a letter acknowledging my arrival. I will then present it in the royal court. If not, apart from losing my job, I will lose my life." Upon his request, Hadrat

dictated a reply in Persian. It was penned, handed over to the ambassador, and he was given leave.

The reply was very concise and contained only the following words: "I have a bond with you on the basis of Islam and I constantly make *du'ā'* for you – especially under the present conditions. I hear about your love for Islam and your appreciation of knowledge. I am very pleased to hear these things and make *du'ā'* that Allāh ﷻ bestows His Blessings upon you. I have received your gift but I have grown old and Allāh ﷻ has given me in abundance, so what will I do with all that money? That is why I am returning it. You may spend it for any other good cause and my *du'ā'*s are nevertheless always with you."

Apart from vigilance and caution, this single incident was sufficient to prove Hadrat's life-long quality of asceticism and his independence of the creation. However, those who have witnessed the asceticism in his daily, twenty-four hour life, do not feel it appropriate to relate merely one example to demonstrate his asceticism.

It is not necessary that man should search for and learn the underlying reasons and wisdom behind the rules of the Sharī'ah and Divine Injunctions. In like manner, it is not essential that all and sundry should know the underlying reasons and wisdom behind the actions of the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ. With reference to an astute and far-sighted worldly person, we say that he will not undertake a task unless he has deeply pondered over it and seen a definite benefit in it. If this is the case with a worldly person, what can be said about the practices of the *Ahullāh* who possess lofty understanding and sound intellect? It is impossible for any of their actions to be devoid of *Dīnī* wisdom, even if our defective worldly minds cannot comprehend it. This is why one should abstain from objections against the statements and actions of the *Ahullāh* – whether by tongue or by heart. This is considered to be essential respect in

tasawwuf and the cause of bestowal.

Thus, it was not necessary that the underlying reasons and wisdom behind certain permissible actions which Imām Rabbānī used to do be exposed to everyone, nor was it necessary for a person who expressed his desire to learn about these [underlying reasons and wisdom] to be informed of them. Despite this, Hadrat's biography is filled with examples of the fact that he did not like to leave his associates with doubts, misgivings, astonishment and confusion. If he found that a person had the capability of understanding, he would take the time to explain the reason to him and would remove his misgivings and misunderstandings.

On one occasion my teacher, Maulānā 'Abd al-Mu'min Sāhib, was present in Hadrat's company. A thought crossed his mind. He felt that the lives of the *buzurgs* should be filled with asceticism, poverty and destitution. He thought that, although the clothes which Hadrat was wearing was permissible and lawful, it was very expensive.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was conversing to someone else at the time. Suddenly he turned his attention to him [Maulānā 'Abd al-Mu'min Sāhib] and said: "It has been quite some time since I have had my own clothes sewn. People send their clothes to me and insist that I should wear it. I wear these clothes to please them. The clothes that I am wearing at present belongs to someone else and are on loan to me. The respective owners will collect their clothes within a few days. When I used to have my clothes sewn, I used to have it made out of coarse fabric." After saying this, Hadrat turned his attention once again to the person with whom he was conversing. Those who were present considered the above statement to be out of place, but the Maulānā regretted his thoughts and broke out into a sweat.

The true humility and self-annihilation which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī possessed was something which was rarely observed in

others. He truly considered himself to be beneath others. He fulfilled the lofty service of guiding and instructing people – a responsibility which had been placed upon his shoulders. He accepted *bay'ah*, instructed the person into *dhikr wa shughl*, explained the harms of the *nafs*, and provided treatment for it[’s rectification]. Despite this, he never considered himself to be a great *'ālim* – teaching an ignoramus. He never considered himself to be the Shaykh, and the other person [only] the *murīd*. Not for a moment did he consider himself to be the one who was sought, and that the other person was [merely] the seeker. He never imagined himself to be above him – enjoying a position of superiority over him.

No one ever heard him addressing his *khādims* as '*khādim*' (attendant), '*mutawassil*' (affiliate) or '*muntasib*' (associate). He always referred to them as 'my people'. Moreover, he would always express to those who requested his *du'ā*'s that his need for their *du'ā*'s was greater than their need for his. On one occasion three people came to pledge *bay'ah* to him. He initiated them and said: "You must make *du'ā*' for me and I will also make *du'ā*' for you. Some *murīds* surpass their *pīrs*."

This was actually in emulation of the Hadīth in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ issued the following order to the entire *ummah*: "A Muslim should request *du'ā*' from his fellow Muslim because such a *du'ā*' is more acceptable."

There is probably nobody else who felt in greater need of the *du'ā*'s of his *khādims* and other ordinary Muslims than he did. In his position as a teacher and instructor of people, he would not initiate a *murīd* unless he felt that Allāh ﷻ had instructed him to do so and, based upon the following Hadīth, he considered himself to be the *khādim* and follower of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in this regard:

"The leader of a people is actually their khādim."

It was this service to others which really made him a leader, and he was so conscious of serving that he never thought of being served. After requesting *du'ā'* from the three *murīds* [mentioned above], he related an incident to them which clearly demonstrates his need and the fact that he was equal to others with regard to his quest for salvation and Allāh's Pleasure. This is known as modesty. He said: "Shaykh San'ān was a great *walī*. Once he departed for *hajj* with a group of his *murīds*. On the way, they passed by a city where he set eyes on a Christian woman. He left all his responsibilities and pursued her. When the Christian woman heard about his desire for her, she sent a message to him, saying: 'You can have me if you agree to four conditions.' He inquired about the conditions and she said: '(1) You will have to wear a *zunnār* (a holy thread with a small cross which is worn around the neck), (2) you will have to show disrespect to the Qur'ān, (3) you will have to graze my pigs, and (4) you will have to drink alcohol.'

Shaykh San'ān did not accept the condition of showing disrespect to the Qur'ān but he accepted the other three conditions. The woman came to meet him. When the *murīds* saw the condition of their Shaykh, they abandoned him. Some of them proceeded to Makkah while the others returned to their homes. Those who went to Makkah performed their *hajj* and then proceeded to Madīnah. Shaykh San'ān had a *murīd* in Madīnah by the name of 'Aḥḥār. They went to meet him and described their Shaykh's pitiful condition. He said: 'How sad! You were wrong in deserting him. When you saw the terrible condition of the Shaykh, you should have thought of ways to rectify and reform him. You should have made *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to rectify him. Allāh ﷻ is the One Who turns hearts. It is not difficult for Him to turn his heart.'

The others regretted their actions and realized that they had not done a good thing. So they all presented themselves before Rasūlullāh's ﷺ grave and cried beseechingly for their Shaykh's guidance. The *du'ā'* was accepted and they hastened to Shaykh San'ān to convey the good news to him. In the meantime, when Shaykh San'ān woke up, he broke the *zunnār* and abandoned the pigs. When the Christian woman saw his changed condition, she embraced Islam and immediately joined him on his journey." Then Hadrat said: "Miyā! This is how some *murīds* save their Shaykhs from slipping."

It is difficult to gauge the degree of Hadrat's love for the Sunnah. He abhorred *ifrāt wa tafrīt* (displaying shortcomings and committing excesses) when following the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Just like his other commendable qualities, he preferred to follow a balanced approach in this regard. A person once asked him about the Sharī'ah's ruling regarding the *ghayr muqallids* (those who do not follow any of the four imāms) of the time. Hadrat sent the following reply: "I consider those people who, while lacking in knowledge, claim to follow the Hadīth by [merely] looking at the translation of *Mishkāṭ* (a Hadīth collection) to be *muḥsidīn-e-ummat* (those who are causing corruption in the *ummah*). However, some people practise upon *āmīn bil jāh* (saying *āmīn* loudly after Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in *ṣalāh*), *rafa' yadayn* (raising the hands before going into prostration during *ṣalāh*) and so forth. If they do so out of love for the Sunnah, and without causing any mischief and corruption, then I do not think ill of such a person. I do, however, reject those who speak ill of the *salaf* (pious predecessors)."

Hadrat fervently abhorred differences and disputes regarding subsidiary issues if these were based upon *nafsānīyyat* (self-centredness), fanaticism and ignorance. He had no interest whatsoever of engaging in debates and discussions of ignorance and would express his astonishment if others engaged in such futilities. On one occasion, a dispute regarding the pronunciation of

دُواد and ضُواد was presented to him. He wrote the following reply:
 "People pronounce the letters ذ، ز، ث، س، ص، ط، ت and so forth
 in place of each other and nobody bothers about it. Yet they will
 write and ask about the pronunciation of ض. This letter neither
 bears any similarity to د nor to ظ. Pronounce it in a manner which
 distinguishes it completely from the other letters. This dispute is
 also based on *naḥṣānīyyat*. It is not part of *Dīn* to get involved in
 such disputes. This is not a *mas'alah* which has to be obtained from
 the '*ulamā*'. If a person really wants to investigate the issue fully,
 he must consult the *qārīs*."

Hadrat would refrain from *bid'āt* (innovations) to such an extent
 that he would omit *mubāḥ* (lawful) acts which he felt might cause a
 person to become inclined towards *bid'ah*, or which could motivate
 a person to use it as a proof. On one occasion he related: "Initially, I
 used to visit Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs's *rahimahullāh* grave.
 I did this on numerous occasions and would sit close to it.
 However, because of the *mubtadi'īn* (innovators), I gave up this
 practice a long time ago. At present I feel quite desirous to visit his
 grave, but I will not go because the *pīr zāde* (descendants of the
 Shaykh) would say that I am leaning towards them [believing as
 they do] and that I have become inclined towards *bid'ah*. This is
 why I convey *salām* from here and do not even try to go there."

Somebody once informed Hadrat of a certain *imām* of a Musjid
 who had pledged *bay'ah* at his hands. He told Hadrat that this *imām*
 was, amongst other things, attending the *maulūd* gatherings and the
ījā and *daswā* celebrations (celebrations on the third and tenth day
 after a person's demise) and, if anyone voiced an objection to the
 fact that he was attending these gatherings, he would claim that he
 had obtained permission from Hadrat. Hadrat became extremely
 angry and immediately wrote the following reply: "The person who
 commits such acts and claims to have obtained permission from me
 is a liar. Show him this letter and ask him to stop his activities. If he

stops, well and good. If not, his *bay'ah* to me will be cancelled."

If there was any risk of *fitnah* or the slightest possibility of causing difficulty to the masses if he should express avoidable *masā'il*, Hadrat would naturally detest doing so and would refrain from discussing such issues. Yes, from a *tablighi* perspective, he would certainly discuss these issues amongst the '*ulamā*'. At the same time, he would instruct them not to discuss it amongst the masses, for fear that they might 'drown' [that it would be beyond their understanding and confuse them]. This was the result of his affection for the creation which Allāh ﷻ had placed within his heart, and the result of being the guide and shepherd of his era. However, if certain issues were [publically] discussed and made popular by others, or if it became known unintentionally, he would accept it as being Divine Will, and would bear the brunt of the hurt which was inflicted upon him by the masses or the antagonistic '*ulamā*' with absolute resolve. He would not deliberately place himself in any position where he could be tested by Allāh ﷻ, nor would he knowingly present himself to such tests.

Hadrat was a close and obedient servant of Allāh ﷻ. His servitude was displayed in every statement, action and moments of activity and inactivity. He considered himself to be particularly incapable and incompetent. He never claimed to be unfaltering in the face of tests which were imposed upon him by Allāh ﷻ, nor did it ever cross his mind that he was incapable of slipping up or becoming fearful. At the same time, whenever his patience and fortitude was unexpectedly tested, no one would be more firm, resolute, patient and grateful than him and, due to this, Allāh ﷻ would increase his rank. After considering the accusations and verbal abuse to be a test from Allāh ﷻ, nobody would bear it with greater willingness than Hadrat. His views on *imkān-e-kidhb* (the possibility of lying), the permissibility of crows and other related *masā'il*, all fall into this category. Those who know the background of these issues will realize that it was due to this that their confidence in Imām Rabbānī

had increased and that they had learnt the essence of servitude from the way in which he had handled these issues.

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn says: "Over a period of about twelve to thirteen years, I was busy with a comparative study of the books of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). I came across a few statements which made me think that the domestic crow, which the masses consider to be *ḥarām*, is actually considered *ḥalāl* according to the *Hanafīs*. I postponed the confirmation of my thoughts until the next time I went to Gangoh. When I eventually presented myself in Gangoh, a person in *Hadrat's* assembly happened to mention that the crows were damaging the crops. I said: 'The books of *fiqh* consider the crow to be *ḥalāl*.' *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī was listening to what I was saying. He smiled and said: 'Yes, you may start eating them. At least their numbers will decrease in that way.' He then added: 'There are certain *masā'il* which are correct in themselves, but popularizing them would cause *fitnah* (confusion and disputes).' The incident passed, but about ten to twelve years later, a person asked for a *fatwā* regarding the issue and *Hadrat* issued a *fatwā* of permissibility. This became known to the masses and the uproar it caused is known to all."

One can say that it was *Hadrat* Imām Rabbānī's *karāmat* (miracle) and *kashf* (exposition), or simply his intelligence and foresight which had caused him to say that it would cause an uproar and *fitnah* amongst the masses. We consider it to be the essential qualities of insight and conviction. These are the qualities which should be present in a *murshid-e-'ālam* (a guide to the world) and it became evident from the outcome of this incident. If *Hadrat* did not have a natural aversion towards *fitnah*, what would have prevented him from popularizing this issue by constantly talking or writing about it? After all, he had received affirmation from Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn *Sāhib* and was in agreement with him!

Hadrat could have sought those who asked for this *fatwā*, or those

who had made an uproar about it. At least he could have reprimanded them and expressed his anger. Of course, he could also have expressed his grief, sadness, remorse and disappointment at all the verbal abuse he had to endure, and the numerous rude articles of some ignorant people who – despite possessing no knowledge of Arabic – were prepared to utter such obscenities. But, by Allāh, he did nothing of the sort. When finally he did say something, it was only after some of his devoted friends had attributed the uproar to the times. Only then did he say: “Miyā! How was I to know that Allāh ﷻ had reserved so much reward for me regarding this issue?”

Despite his constant striving and his total engrossment in following the Sunnah, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī always considered himself to be prone to error and oversight. Not only with his tongue, but even with his heart he accepted the fact that he did not fulfil the rights of servitude which was due to Allāh ﷻ and that he did not emulate the Sunnah to the full. This admission and realisation of his own shortcomings is in and of itself a commendable act and a means to attaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ. This conviction [in his own fallibility] constantly increased his courage. It boosted his desire and yearning to reach Allāh ﷻ, and caused him to progress to lofty ranks during every moment of his life. Thus he continued to ascend the never-ending steps of *wilāyat* (close friendship with Allāh ﷻ).

On one occasion Hadrat quoted someone – most probably Maulānā Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib. He said: “Salāh and fasting may have increased during these times, but brotherhood has decreased, and so has seeing to the welfare of others.” With much sadness he then added: “Look, it has been such a long time since I met with my brother!”

On countless occasions the *khādims* witnessed Hadrat’s concern for his brother. Whenever he went to his house to have his meal, before entering the door, he would ask his *khādim*: “Has the food been sent to Bhāi Sāhib’s house?” The *khādim* would either answer in

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the affirmative, or assure him that he would take the food immediately. Can there be more concern than this? Yet Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not consider such brotherhood to be the kind of brotherhood his sound heart was seeking. Both of them had been excused from meeting one another, yet Hadrat still felt that he should display more courage in this regard.

Hadrat used to talk about the Sahābah ﷺ with great enthusiasm. On one occasion he was speaking about the Battle of Jamal and, while relating the incident, he said: "Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* was seated on her camel. Three of its legs were severed during the course of the battle, but it still continued carrying its rider. This was Hadrat 'Ā'ishah's *radiyallāhu 'anhā* miracle (*karāmat*)."

While Hadrat was talking about the martyrdom of Hadrat Talhah ﷺ and Hadrat Zubayr ﷺ his eyes welled up with tears. This was the effect of his sincere love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ – the kind of love which ought to be in the heart of every Muslim. Without this love, no one's *īmān* can be complete.

The manner in which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī delivered talks was unique. He would speak about the Sharī'ah and *Tarīqah*, but not a single word he uttered ever gave the slightest indication of his own excellence. Hadrat Maulānā Mīr Ahmad Hasan Sāhib Amrohī once asked Hadrat for an explanation of the verse:

إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

"He [man] is unjust, ignorant."

The Maulānā was an 'ālim himself. In fact, he was a famous 'ālim in the field of *tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis) and honestly wanted Hadrat to provide a different meaning to the verse. Thus, Hadrat said: "The Sufis consider this to be in praise of man. A true lover will indeed make himself look ignorant and foolish and even punish

himself and put himself through difficulty in order to obey the instructions of his Beloved."

Although he constantly tried to avoid exposing his spiritual condition in his talks, he could not subdue the love with which Allāh ﷻ had filled his heart, no matter how hard he tried to restrain himself. This was the result of the 'special colour of love' with which those who have been accepted in the Court of Allāh ﷻ have been dyed. Therefore, whether he liked it or not, the effect of his spiritual condition would be exposed in his talks. On one occasion he delivered the 'īd talk and spoke about the following verse:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I created jinn and man solely for My worship."

He translated the word لِيَعْبُدُونِ as "so that they may continue to remain My slaves". Then he said: "The life, wealth and everything else of a slave belongs to the master. The slave has no right whatsoever over any of it." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī discussed this topic in great detail and in very simple language. The beauty of the talk was specifically experienced by those who were present, more so because the verbal statements which were uttered by the speaker was in congruence with his internal condition. Thus, even if I were to quote the entire talk, the same enjoyment would not be experienced.

Allāh ﷻ had blessed Imām Rabbānī with phenomenal intelligence. He could fathom the depths of an issue and provide an immediate and convincing answer. He was the leader amongst the 'ulamā' of his time. Whenever the learned of the time were stumped by a particular matter and unable to comprehend it, they would turn to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. Hadrat would provide them with spontaneous answers, leaving those who questioned him astounded. There was once a discussion on Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. Hadrat Maulānā

Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, do Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj know Allāh ﷻ or are they totally ignorant of Him?" Hadrat responded spontaneously: "Why should they not know Him? There is a Hadīth that states that, the day after they say *Inshā Allāh*, they will be able to break through the wall and escape. This proves that they do know Allāh ﷻ."

Hadrat's innate intelligence and shrewdness had been bestowed upon him by Allāh ﷻ from the very beginning. Maulwī Deputy Karīm Bakhsh Sāhib was a legislator from Gwalior and was Hadrat's classmate in Delhi [in their youth]. On one occasion he related to Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī: "I've met your Hadrat on numerous occasions. During the last fifty years Hadrat must have become quite well-known for his knowledge, because there is no other Hanafī 'ālim like him. During our student days I noticed that all the other students were scared of Maulwī Sāhib. The students of the *madrasah* gave him the title هل من مبارز – "*is there anyone to challenge me?*" However, this was not the case during Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib's student days." When Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī told Hadrat what Maulwī Deputy Sāhib had said, Hadrat smiled. After that, he enquired about Deputy Sāhib for quite some time.

There was a time when Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was studying under Janāb Maulwī Karīm Bakhsh Sāhib Punjābī [in Delhi]. A foreign student arrived in Delhi and claimed that there was no one in Delhi who could teach him. He was studying *Shāfiyah*. Maulwī Karīm Bakhsh Sāhib did not approve of this student's claims. One day the Maulānā was delivering his lesson. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was also studying in the same class. When Maulwī Karīm Bakhsh Sāhib completed the lesson, he said: "Rashīd Aḥmad! Here, take this *Jārbardī* and *Kāfiyah* (names of two books) and teach that foreign student. Remember, if you return to me with your head lowered [if you fail to succeed], I will shave off all your hair."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī placed the books under his arm and proceeded directly to the student. He started conversing with him and opened the book by the way. He then started teaching him the book. The student, who had been so boastful about his capabilities, was left astounded. Eventually he said: "Teach me the entire book." Hadrat closed the book and said: "It is not my objective to teach you, I merely intended bringing you down to size. You claimed that none of the '*ulamā*' of Delhi could teach you. One of their most junior students proved you wrong!" Saying this, Hadrat proceeded to Maulwī Sāhib and said: "Hadrat, I taught him and left him speechless."

Hadrat's intelligence and Allāh-endowed capabilities are spiritual excellences in itself. Despite his lofty rank in this regard, he did not consider himself equal to even the lowest among the students. During his teaching days, one of the students started to praise the excellent manner in which he had delivered the lesson. Contrary to his habit, he spontaneously took an oath and said: "By Allāh, I do not consider myself equal to the lowest student amongst you." There is no parallel to this excellence.

Allāh ﷻ has endowed numerous people with intelligence, although the degree thereof may differ according to that which has been destined for them. However, one does not often find a person in which knowledge has been combined with humility, let alone perfection in knowledge combined with perfection in humility.

Hadrat was naturally predisposed to showing mercy and affection to his juniors and according respect to his elders. He never acted contrary to this predisposition. His *khādims* used to go to him to massage his legs with the intention of setting right their affairs for the Hereafter. He would permit them to massage his legs and give them an opportunity to rectify and reform themselves. However, if it started to get a bit late, he would say to them with absolute affection: "Enough Bhāi! Go and sleep now. May Allāh ﷻ bless

you.”

Miyā Sa‘īd [Hadrat’s grandson] was once scolded by his father, Hakīm Mas‘ūd Aḥmad Sāhib. His father told him: “O *khābīth*!” The moment Hadrat Imām Rabbānī heard these words, he said: “How can he be a *khābīth*?” Saying this, he embraced Miyā Sa‘īd and continued hugging him for a long time.

Maulānā Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* was older than Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, but he was one of Hadrat’s devoted *khādims*. He had great confidence in Hadrat and loved him dearly. Whenever he went to Hadrat, he would spontaneously kiss his feet, and his eyes would well up with tears. This would embarrass Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and he would say: “Maulānā, why do you embarrass me in such a way? You are older than me. It is my duty to respect you. I really feel ashamed when you do such things.” Maulwī Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib was a man of insight. Hadrat’s lofty position and his intense love for him naturally imposed upon him to do what he did. However, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī could not forget to pay due consideration to old age and to Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ instruction:

مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَلَمْ يُوقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا

“The person who does not show mercy to our juniors and does not accord respect to our elders is not of us.”

Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Sāhib’s grandfather was an old man. Together with old age, Allāh ﷻ had endowed him with special effulgence (*nūr*) in his heart. Consequently, he fully recognized Hadrat’s rank and, whenever he presented himself before Hadrat, he would display much confidence and devotion to him – as though he was Hadrat’s *khādim*. Onlookers would think that he was Hadrat’s *murīd*. On one occasion Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Sāhib said: “Hadrat, was my grandfather merely impressed by you or was he

your *murīd* as well?" Hadrat replied: "He had pledged *bay'ah* to Qādī Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib Marhūm, but his devotion to me surpassed that of my own *murīds*." Hadrat added: "Once, I was sitting in my room and teaching *Bukhārī Sharīf* when your grandfather entered. He was already in a state of *wudū'*, but he took a water can, filled it with water, washed his feet and then entered the room. Upon seeing his manner, despite his old age, I felt immensely ashamed and said: 'Hadrat, why are you embarrassing me?' He replied: 'You enjoy a great status. There may have been something on my feet.'"

It is a spiritual excellence to accord respect to one's elders in emulation of the Sunnah. However, to accord every person only that which is due to them and to stay within the limits (*muḥāfazat ul hudūd*) is a very difficult quality to achieve. This is a quality one rarely observes in others. Although Imām Rabbānī used to accord utmost respect to those who were older than him, he found it impossible to remain silent if they acted against the Sharī'ah in any way. The kind of respect that imposes upon the respect which is due to Rasūlullāh ﷺ is in actual fact disrespect and weakness of the heart. The *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ have been protected against this. On one occasion Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib's grandfather – whom we mentioned above – came to Hadrat with a *fatwā* regarding a missing husband [the ruling with regard to a woman whose husband's whereabouts are not known]. His opinion differed from Hadrat's opinion regarding this issue. Hadrat therefore sent him back without signing the *fatwā* and said: "I do not consider it to be correct, therefore I will not sign it."

When Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib reminded Hadrat of this incident, Hadrat replied: "Your grandfather's opinion on the issue coincided with that of Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*. That is why I did not sign it at the time. Now that the rail and telegraph systems are in operation in every city, the entire scenario surrounding the question has changed [previously there was no means of

communication]. Therefore I now also practice according to the *madh-hab* of Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*."

On one occasion Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib said: "Ḥadrat, my respected grandfather was very cautious. Whenever a Hindu washerman washed his clothes, he would not wear it until he had personally rinsed it." Ḥadrat responded: "This was based on your grandfather's personal opinion. According to the Sharī'ah, clothes washed by a Hindu washerman are not impure. Look at the amount of clothes that comes from England. Is there anyone who will say they are impure? Everyone wears them."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "When the leader of any nation comes to you, you must honour him." Whenever any senior leader of an opposing group would visit Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī, he would accord the honour due to him without reservation. At the same time, Ḥadrat would never soften his approach regarding any contentious issue. Besides, if honouring such a person is in obedience to Rasūlullāh's ﷺ instruction, how can one withhold such honour from him?

Once Maulwī 'Abd as-Samī' Sāhib attended a function in Gangoh and visited Ḥadrat. Ḥadrat met him with great hospitality and invited him to have a meal with him. This happened at a time when the Maulwī Sāhib had already written *Anwār Sāṭi'ah*. Moreover, Ḥadrat had already published his response to *Anwār Sāṭi'ah* and thus fulfilled Rasūlullāh's ﷺ order of subduing *fitnah* and refuting *bid'ah* – an order which every Muslim is supposed to act upon. Nevertheless, this was the time to honour a guest and the leader of a group, and Ḥadrat did this as well. Maulwī 'Abd as-Samī' Sāhib accepted the invitation and had a meal with Ḥadrat. Ḥadrat makes mention of this invitation in one of his *maktūbāt* (writings). He writes: "I thought we might have a verbal discussion on the subject of *bid'āt* and that I would be able to provide him with answers, but the guest did not even incidentally mention anything related to the subject. Why should the host then initiate such a discussion and

place the burden of a debate upon him? We will now have to wait and see whether he thinks about writing anything in response to *Barāhīn [Qāṭi'ah]*. If he writes anything, the same reply will be given to him."

Hadrat's practical demonstration of hospitality to the Maulwī Sāhib, together with every word of his published article [*Barāhīn [Qāṭi'ah]*], demonstrates his spiritual excellence. This good character and respect towards his guest – while taking the Sharī'ah into consideration [with regard to refuting *bid'ah*] – can only be enjoyed by a Muslim who is moderate in his approach and steadfast on the straight path. *Hifz-e-marātib* (taking someone's rank into consideration) is a fundamental excellence. Many people are unable to adhere to it and, because of this, many senior people have slipped up.

Allāh ﷻ granted numerous ranks and positions unto people. After first obeying one's Creator, a Muslim servant thereby becomes obedient [subservient] unto many people. Since obedience to the entire creation falls within the boundaries of the Order of Allāh ﷻ, all these acts of obedience are in actual fact obedience to One Allāh ﷻ. A Hadīth states:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

"Obedience to the creation is not lawful
if it entails disobedience to the Creator."

Similarly, bearing in mind the different ranks of people, it is not permissible [according to the Sharī'ah] to obey someone below you if it entails disobedience to someone who is placed above you. According to the norm, the father, elder brother, teacher, master, Shaykh, imām and Messenger are all considered to be one's seniors and are thus to be obeyed. However, since their ranks and positions differ, a person cannot obey his elder brother if it entails

disobedience to his father. The order of one's parents or teacher may not be carried out if it entails disobedience to one's spiritual father [one's Shaykh]. Furthermore, an order of one's Shaykh may not be carried out if it entails disobedience to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Consequently, it is a great test for a Muslim to adhere to these different acts of obedience, while giving due consideration to the ranks of each and safeguarding the limits. A Muslim has to maintain the rank of each person and obey him accordingly. It is compulsory for every Muslim to respect the laws of Sharī'ah. He must observe the one above him and the one below him and he must respect each one according to his rank. Only a steadfast, resolute Shaykh who possesses insight, can successfully pass such a test – a Shaykh who has, from head to toe, completely annihilated himself become immersed in his obedience to the Sharī'ah, and in whose flesh and blood a love for the Sunnah has been so firmly embedded that it has become second nature to emulate it.

This excellence, known as *hifz-e-marātib*, is the core of all spiritual excellences. Many 'ulamā' could not fulfil the rights of this excellence – let alone the masses, who consider it to be *kufr*. I am not in a position to write on this intricate subject nor am I qualified to do so. However, from what I have heard, I can certainly say that Allāh ﷻ had tested Hadrat Imām Rabbānī in this most fundamental excellence. The test which he was put through was in line with his lofty position. The outward differences of opinion on contentious issues which existed between him and his Shaykh, A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib, was a test from Allāh ﷻ and a yardstick by which a *sālik*, a true deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and a Shaykh who is a follower of the Sunnah needs to be measured.

When you reach the level of Imām Rabbānī, your test becomes so much more difficult. This is why the test of the Quṭb of the era lay in solving this problem. He needed the insight to choose between the practice of the Shaykh-e-Tarīqah and the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, while bearing in mind the rank of the person and giving due

respect to his Shaykh. This was a difficult test indeed and appropriate for someone of his rank. Allāh forbid! A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was neither a *mubtadi'* (innovator) nor was he inclined towards *bid'āt*. People of insight consider his intellectual excellences and spiritual blessings to be proof of this. Furthermore, the foreword to the book *Barāhīn-e-Qāṭi'ah*, which was written by A'lā Hadrat, bears clear testimony to this claim. However, A'lā Hadrat did not like the forcefulness which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī so firmly adhered to with regards to reforming the masses and reviving the Sunnah.

It is an accepted principle of *tasawwuf* that, once a person becomes a *sāhib-e-nisbat* and has come to the end of the path, it is no longer necessary for him to follow every action of his Shaykh – as is necessary for a novice and beginner. The biographies of the pious predecessors are filled with examples of incidents where the *murīd* did not consider that certain actions of his Shaykh should be followed³⁵. Such examples can even be found in the biographies of the Sahābah ﷺ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ – not only in that of the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ. However, since this book is not the place for such a discussion, I will not go into any further details.

Imām Rabbānī received a certificate from A'lā Hadrat, declaring him worthy and completely capable, and thus became a *sāhib-e-nisbat mujāz-e-Tarīqah*. Based upon the principle mentioned above [that a *murīd* who has attained *nisbat* is allowed to disagree with his Shaykh on certain issues] Imām Rabbānī's disagreement with A'lā Hadrat, not only rendered him blameless according to the Sharī'ah, but even according to the *Tarīqah*. Regardless, through this

³⁵ Shaykh Abdul Wāhid Bin Zayd *rahimahullāh*, the Khalifa of Hasan Bagri *rahimahullāh*, would eat a few morsels of food every three days and would wash his hand after touching money, even if he gave it all away in *sadaqah*. None of the *murīd* considered this necessary to emulate. Rasūlullāh ﷺ fasted for three days consecutively without eating anything inbetween.

difference of opinion, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had passed the test of *hifz-e-marātib* in the path to spiritual excellence. He considered A'lā Hadrat to be a Shaykh and a guide on the prophetic path, but he did not consider him to be a Prophet or a Messenger.

The difference between the means and the person possessing the means are known to man, but many people are unable to distinguish the difference between the two. This is the Bounty of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows upon whomever He Wills. Undoubtedly, the following statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ rings true:

اختلاف امتي رحمة

"Difference in my ummah is a source of Mercy."

There is no question whatsoever that the motivation behind the opinions of both parties was absolute sincerity. On the one hand A'lā Hadrat was so beloved [by Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ] that he considered it praiseworthy to be lenient towards them. On the other hand Imām Rabbānī was absolutely immersed in his love [for Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ] and he considered this path of guiding and instructing the people with *tafaqquh* (deep understanding of the principles of Shari'ah) to be in emulation of the Sunnah. Whatever the case may be, whenever wicked and obstinate people delve into this intricate subject, it becomes a cause of their deviation. People can say what they like, but Allāh ﷻ is Witness that, without a doubt, if Hadrat Imām Rabbānī – being a rolemodel amongst the '*ulamā*', the embodiment of both Shari'ah and *Tariqah*, and a deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – had adopted a stance which outwardly appeared to be in agreement with his Shaykh's statements and actions, it would have been a major obstacle in his path to reaching this lofty level.

*There is no room for the ill-mannered on this path ...
His place is the gallows!*

*In this relationship
there is no room for such a person.*

*We ask of Allāh the ability to be well-mannered,
for the ill-mannered one is deprived of the Grace of Allāh.*

Hadrat's pearl of steadfastness glittered like the mid-day sun in this path that is finer than a strand of hair, and the entire world bore witness to it. The priceless crown of his position of guidance and deputyship with regards to *tahaffuz-e-marātib* (upholding of positions) and *muhāfazah-e-hudūd* (safeguarding of limits) shone on his blessed head to such an extent that every corner of the globe had become aware of it.

ليهلك من هلك عن بينة ويحيى من حي عن بينة

*"So that the one who dies, may die having seen the proof
and the one who lives, may live having seen the proof."*

As a result of each one's *nisbat* and the different spiritual bounties and gifts which Allāh had bestowed upon them, the crux of the difference of opinion and approach which existed between the spiritual father and son is nothing more than the aforementioned. There was no change whatsoever in the affection and love which A'lā Hadrat showed towards Imām Rabbānī, nor was there any change whatsoever in the confidence and respect with which Imām Rabbānī's treated A'lā Hadrat. If there was any delay from Imām Rabbānī's side in sending a letter or inquiring about him, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib would become restless and send letter upon letter, inquiring about Imām Rabbānī. If A'lā Hadrat's letter arrived at any time during the year, apart from the *hajj* season, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would beam with joy and would read out the letter repeatedly to his close friends, saying: "We have learnt about our Hadrat's well-being out of season."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's relationship of affection and love can be gauged from *Makātīb Rashīdiyyah* in which twelve of his letters are quoted at the beginning. Nevertheless, it is necessary for us to say that there were those who found pleasure in disputes and discord, and they tried their utmost to create some sort of ill-feeling between these two sanctified hearts. However, their hearts were not such that it could come under the control of these deviated souls and thereby deprive themselves.

On the one hand they spoke to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and told him that Maulānā Gangohī considered a person who participates in *maulūd* to be a *kāfir* and a *mushrik* and that he had included him [A'lā Hadrat] amongst them. On the other hand they told Imām Rabbānī that Hadrat Hājī Sāhib had cancelled his *bay'ah* with him, and that he had severed all ties with him. Those who were bent on creating discord spared no effort in trying to cause division between them. But, the internal [heart] bond which Allāh ﷻ had created between the two of them could not be broken by anyone.

When obscenities went beyond their limit and terrifying rumours started spreading around, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī wrote a letter to A'lā Hadrat and asked him if there was any truth in all these rumours. I shall now relate a part of the lengthy reply which A'lā Hadrat sent to Imām Rabbānī:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

"From this poor servant, Imdādullāh, may Allāh ﷻ pardon him, to the one who combines Sharī'ah and *Tarīqah*, Maulānā Maulwī Rashīd Ahmād Sāhib Muḥaddith Gangohī, may Allāh ﷻ enable us to benefit from his long life and may He destroy his enemies.

As salāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. I received your blessed letter, dated 14 Ramadān Sharīf, via Maulwī Mumtāz 'Alī

Sāhib. It brought much joy to me and I was very pleased to receive it. May Allāh ﷻ bless you with well-being and love, protect you from undesirable things in both worlds, and bless you with lofty levels of proximity and pleasure in both worlds.

Maulānā, your letter was a source of great delight and it also provided focus to my thoughts. I therefore hope you always gladden me and bring joy to me with your well-being, internal and external conditions, and so forth.

Every word and every statement of your letter created a unique condition and delight. Maulānā, whatever was attributed to you in *Diyā'al-Qulūb* was not written by you. It was merely expressed as Divinely Inspired to you. To abstain from accepting the obvious, and to separate yourself from your means of salvation and success in both worlds, is a sign of severe ignorance, deprivation and rejection. I firmly believe that your inclusion amongst the '*ulamā*' and *sulahā*' (righteous) is a source of pride in both worlds for me, a means to my salvation, and a means to my success in both worlds. Why, then, would I expel you [from my group of associates]?

I make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to totally annihilate you in your love for the righteous. The person who bears malice, evil thoughts, enmity, or dislike for a sanctified person and leader like you is actually a renegade. I consider all your activities, statements, and actions to be the cause of goodness and blessings, and in accordance with the Sharī'ah and the Tarīqah. I firmly believe you to be sincere and true in all your matters..."

Towards the end of his letter, A'lā Hadrat wrote:
"... This is why I did not read or look at any of your writings on contentious issues. What would the purpose of investigating such writings be, when I know that all your statements are in accordance with the Sharī'ah? Although I may not agree with you on certain issues, I consider such differences to be like the differences which

existed amongst the Sahābah ﷺ. A rationalization of every statement of yours brings absolute consolation to my heart.”

As for Imām Rabbānī ... the love which he had for A'lā Hadrat could not be displayed because of the level of his self-control. Though he was totally immersed in it, he did not even make an open display of his love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ so that people could say that he was an ardent lover of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His spiritual strength, and his heart's ability to bear heavy burdens, considered the fruit of love to be confined to obedience and emulation. This caused him to spend his entire life in the service of the pure Sharī'ah. This was greatly amplified in his life and the display of his love manifested itself solely in his obedience to his beloved's instructions.

Despite this, when the dreadful news of A'lā Hadrat's demise reached India and fell upon Imām Rabbānī's ears, the anguish which he experienced could be seen by everyone present. Although he was a mountain of fortitude and had borne the successive pains of losing his near and beloved ones, he never experienced the depression which he suffered at the time when Murshid al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] departed from this world. He could not eat several of his meals. He could not speak to anyone or sit in any gathering. His eyes would flow with tears and, although he tried to control himself, he would become restless.

So many years have passed since then. Today it is clear that the intensity of Imām Rabbānī's pain and anguish after the demise of A'lā Hadrat was probably not experienced by anyone else. For several months he would lie on his bed at night and give leave to his *khādims*. He would remain in solitude on his bed and cry for hours on end. Some of his close associates happened to go to him while he was in this condition. They heard a sound that resembled that of a cauldron which had been placed over a fire, with its contents boiling. But, observe the level of his self-control: The moment he perceived anyone's presence, he would hide his grief

and revert to a calm and peaceful state.

There was no need for his private condition to be exposed – especially considering the fact that he did not want it to be exposed for as long as he was alive. However, I feel compelled to write about it. Although he remained in this condition of grief and sorrow for several months, whenever he spoke about A'lā Hadrat, he would say: "I do not possess as much love for Hadrat as others have for him." This meant that he did not consider his love for him to be sufficient or worthy of consideration. Even in this commendable condition he considered himself to be beneath others, and others to be better than him. From the depths of his heart he desired that he should have been endowed with even greater love for A'lā Hadrat and an even greater bond with him.

Only those who were especially close to Imām Rabbānī knew of his restlessness, trembling and crying during his periods of solitude. However, even the general masses would notice that his eyes would well up with tears, and that he would become restless whenever he mentioned A'lā Hadrat in his assembly, or whenever an outsider would offer him words of consolation. He would want to cry, but would control himself. This struggle would cause a change in his movements and it would take several hours for him to return to normality. Eventually everyone around him became cautious of speaking about A'lā Hadrat. When any outsider arrived, they would inform him beforehand not to make any mention of A'lā Hadrat in Imām Rabbānī's presence.

It would not be possible for us to estimate the severity of the test with which Allāh ﷻ had tried Imām Rabbānī through this calamity. He considered his love and respect for his Shaykh, his adherence to the Sharī'ah, and his assumption of his duty as deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ – rectifying and reforming people – to be the sun and the moon. He made it the light of his eyes, and traversed the straight path which is finer than a hair and sharper than a sword. The truth of the

matter is that only someone of his stature could have accomplished all this. He understood the means as the means, and considered the objective [Allāh ﷻ] as his sole objective. Thus he observed the *marātib* (ranks and positions) and preserved the *hudūd* (limits) of Allāh ﷻ. Only the *mujaddid* of every century – through the inspiration of Allāh ﷻ – is capable of fulfilling this [duty] in such a manner.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*"This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ
which He bestows on whomever He Wills."*

During the course of treading this intricate path, Hadrat had to bear every type of accusation and obscenity – hurled at him by immature and ignorant people. But Allāh's ﷻ Grace and Affection had become his refuge, and therefore it did not cause him to slip in the least.

*Hundreds of spears and thousands of arrows
have rained down upon me.*

*The striking of swords has cut my heart into shreds.
Yet, not a word of complaint [has escaped from my lips]
nor did a tear even fall from my eyes.*

*May Allāh reward this wounded one
[with] the reward of a hundred martyrs.*

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī always used to experience a special joy whenever he expressed his gratitude towards his Benefactor [Allāh ﷻ]. Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib was once relating his own condition to him when Hadrat said: "For a long time I have been sitting at the grave of Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. Shāh Sāhib has also taught me. Whatever benefit I have derived has been by virtue of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs Sāhib." The fact that

Hadrat mentioned Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's name before he mentioned Hadrat Shaykh's name – while expressing gratitude to Hadrat Shaykh – indicates the commendable respect [which he had for his Shaykh], which ought to be referred to as a major part of spiritual excellence.

It would be difficult for us to fathom the nature of Imām Rabbānī's heart – this heart which was made to bear such a priceless and valuable gem. If anyone should succeed in grasping its nature, it would be difficult for him to explain it to others. Allāh ﷻ is my Witness, anything I write would be insufficient. I do not possess the power to express my feelings in words. The fact of the matter is that I am a spiritually sick person and an absolute novice, and I cannot even gauge the extent of the spiritual excellences that had been placed within Hadrat. The only thing I know for sure, and am able to write about, is that a sincere desire to emulate the Pure Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ had been firmly embedded in his heart, and it had become second nature to his physical body [to act upon it]. Every moment of his life taught the lesson of following the Sunnah, and every mannerism created a yearning in the people to follow in his footsteps. This was his single fundamental excellence. All the others excellences he possessed were its branches. This firmly-embedded condition was the ruler, and every moment of activity and inactivity was its subject.

When it came to his qualities of asceticism, contentment; striving; patience at times of calamity; gratitude at times of prosperity; piety; purity; sincerity; expression of servitude; honesty; integrity; forbearance; loyalty; kindness to the creation; affection to people; rectification and reformation; preference to others over himself; generosity; modesty; chastity; acceptance of Allāh's Decree; reliance upon the Nourisher of the world; fear; humility; hope for Mercy; servitude to the Master; love for Allāh's Sake; hatred for Allāh's Sake – in short, in every commendable trait and spiritual excellence – he achieved the position which an imām and leader of

the 'ulamā' is supposed to achieve.

He had been endowed with the special and glorious quality of trust and reliance upon Allāh ﷻ (*tawakkul*). During the initial phases of his teaching career he tutored children and thus earned his livelihood. This was also in emulation of the Sunnah of the Prophets ﷺ who had spent their early years herding and tending to sheep. In doing so they had become accustomed to spending their lives reforming and teaching Allāh's Creation, tending and supervising His servants. Later on – when he was given the mantle of instruction, and the turban of prophetic deputyship was placed upon his head – he chose to remain totally aloof from earning his livelihood [receiving remuneration for his services]. Since childhood, his pure heart had been convinced that, once a person devotes himself to Allāh ﷻ, He Alone takes the responsibility of fulfilling that person's needs and necessities.

He did not want to waste a single moment in quest of sustenance at the cost of his Master's *Dīn*. His sustenance had already been promised to him. Initially he was put through the test of poverty and destitution but, even when he faced the limits of starvation, his reliance and trust in the Promises of his True Allāh did not waver. It had reached such a level that he remained a devoted servant and slave at the door of his Creator, regardless of his impoverished condition. No whisper ever entered his heart that he should knock at any other door. He considered it to be most disrespectful and a sign of complaint if he were to display his poverty and need in front of another human being who was equally needy. His high-mindedness and lofty integrity would not allow him to make his poverty known to others. Very often, no fire could be lit in his home because there was nothing to cook. Despite this, he never took a loan from anyone. This is proof of his willingness to continue living in poverty for the rest of his life [if it were the Will of Allāh ﷻ]. He understood that, if Allāh ﷻ were to keep him in his condition of poverty, he would never have been able to pay back what he had

borrowed and, if this were to happen, circumstances would have forced him to commit the sins of breaking promises and speaking lies. Thus, he considered poverty to be better than filling one's stomach by taking loans. Remaining steadfast in the Master's Test is superior to presenting one's need before everyone else.

*If a Gardener desires to spend
even five days in the company of the flowers,
then ... as the sweet lament of the nightingale ...
he will have to bear the thorns of separation.*

*O heart, do not cry about becoming tangled
in the tresses of her beautiful hair!
When an intelligent, fast bird of prey
becomes trapped inside a net,
it perseveres and is patient.*

After this test, Allāh ﷻ opened the doors of success to him. Together with showering him with spiritual bounties, He also blessed him with material wealth and prosperity. The more he tried to flee from this world, the more worldly commodities and possessions would cling to his feet. He refused to accept gifts from his associates and would feel alarmed upon receiving them. But, the All-Independent Allāh ﷻ compelled him to accept [these gifts] by instilling in him the reality of the disappointment that the giver would experience if he were to refuse. Hence he would accept and take possession of the wealth.

Hadrat's obstinate antagonists conveyed false information to the rulers. The result was that they appointed officials to investigate his assets. When they eventually arrived in Gangoh and entered the *khānqāh*, Hadrat was busy conducting Hadīth lessons. He thus paid no attention to them. When he completed his lesson, he was asked about his source of income. He replied: "Tawakkul (trust and reliance upon Allāh ﷻ)." The official did not understand what

tawakkul meant, and how he earned his livelihood. He started to enumerate all the different means of livelihood by asking Hadrat: "Do you practise agriculture? Do you have a business? Are you a landowner? Are you employed by anyone? Do you receive a salary from anyone? Do you practise any craft?" Hadrat replied in the negative to all these questions. The official eventually asked: "Where do you get your food from and what do you do [for a living]?" Hadrat replied: "I receive from the Unseen Treasures [of Allāh ﷻ] and I practise *tawakkul*."

The investigator lowered his head and remained engrossed in thinking about something for a long time. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what he was thinking, but he eventually took out a twenty rupee note and offered it to Hadrat. When he was about to depart, Hadrat accepted the note without hesitation and said: "This is the *tawakkul* which is my means of livelihood and regarding which you were questioning me."

The fear of Allāh ﷻ which was in his heart – which is the fruit of true knowledge – was so well controlled that it was difficult for him to express and display it openly. Such fear was probably not witnessed anywhere else. However, whenever he would perform his ṣalāh during the last part of the night and extend his hands in supplication, his condition would be like that of a slave before his king. At times he would be overcome [with emotion] and cry uncontrollably. His voice would become subdued, his tears would flow like a string of pearls, and his entire body would tremble. Sometimes he would read a verse from the Qur'ān. [He would cry so much that] his condition would cause him to stop reading. He would start reading the verse again – stop again – and when the morning arrived, he would still be reading the same verse.

Maulwī Mumtāz 'Alī Sāhib Ambhetwī writes: "When the news of Hadrat's demise reached us here in Baluchistān, Maulānā Abū al-Khayr Sāhib happened to be here. I received two messages asking

me to go and meet him, but I did not get the opportunity. When I eventually went to meet him, I found him crying profusely. The moment he saw me, he started crying even more, until he eventually started sobbing uncontrollably. The entire assembly was affected by this and the people were on the verge of losing consciousness. Maulānā Abū al-Khāyr then said: "Aah, Maulwī Mumtāz 'Alī! A very senior personality of India has departed. How sad, people did not value him and did not realize who he was. I heard from reliable sources that Hadrat Maulānā would cry over a single verse and pass the entire night in this way. The verse that had caused him to cry so much was:

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ

*"The day when all secrets shall be examined,
he will neither have any power, nor anyone to help him."
(Sūrah at-Tāriq, 86: 9-10)*

How can this unworthy author – who himself did not fully appreciate Imām Rabbānī's emotional states – understand them or express them in words? In order to understand them one requires a sound emotional state. It is the domain of the heart – a heart which possesses some fear, or has trod this path and received some taste of it. No matter how openly, or with what amount of intelligence, or how eloquently a person explains the enjoyment of conjugal relations to a minor, he would never be able to understand it until he reaches the age of puberty. Thus, when the fire of love [for Allāh ﷻ] is raging in a lover's heart, how can a person, who merely looks at its outward form and does not know the true meaning of love, understand what the lover is going through?

A poet says:

*What does the eye know about love
which is concealed within the heart?*

*What does a free man know
about the meaning of being enslaved?*

Once, Hadrat was busy reading the Qur'ān in his room after the zuhr salāh. This immature servant [Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī Sāhib here refers to himself] went silently to Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib and sat down next to him, without Hadrat learning of my arrival. After a short while, Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib left the room to do some work and I was left alone. A few minutes later, Hadrat's tone of recitation changed, and gradually his entire body started trembling. He started crying profusely and his voice came to a halt. He tried to read further, but his emotion choked him and prevented him from producing a sound. Allāh ﷻ is my Witness – and Allāh's Testimony is sufficient – even a fragile, frail and weak-hearted person who is facing a ferocious, roaring lion would probably not experience the kind of fear which overpowered Hadrat. No hardened criminal standing before a powerful king could fear his outcome more [that Hadrat feared his outcome on that day].

This was the first time I ever saw Hadrat in such a condition and, to this day, I still do not know what it was that he had feared and why he had trembled. It was the same Qur'ān which every Muslim constantly reads from beginning to end. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows the topic and subject matter which would cause such fear and trembling. Upon witnessing his changed condition, I felt disturbed and started trembling. I got up from where I was sitting. Even now, when I remember that day, I become disturbed. I experienced great anguish and thought to myself: "O Allāh! What calamity has befallen me today?" I panicked. If I were to remain seated, Hadrat might come to know of my presence – either through *kashf* or in some other way – and I would have been reprimanded. If I were to get up and leave, he would certainly hear my footsteps and this would be more dangerous for me. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what the condition of my heart was at that time. I was neither in the sky nor

on earth. I remained silent and still as a statue. Instead of my terror-stricken heart benefiting from the situation, I made a sincere and beseeching *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ that He would allow Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib to return.

My *du'ā'* had truly emanated from my heart and was made at a time of real trepidation because, a few moments later, Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib – who had open permission to enter and leave the room as he pleased – entered. The moment he placed his foot at the entrance of the door, Ḥadrat immediately suppressed his condition and sat upright. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows why he had experienced this unique condition and how he had managed to suppress such intense emotion in the blink of an eye. I have since come to the conclusion that this is also a commendable condition which the *auliya'* of Allāh ﷻ are able to experience by virtue of their emulation of the Sunnah. This is what turns a young person into an old man, and a strong person into a weak man. I could not understand anything else at the time, nor can I understand anything more at present.

Seeing to the needs of others, simplicity and informality were special traits of Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī. It was the month of Ramaḍān and, coincidentally, Maulānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān Sāhib Deobandī did not wake up at his usual time for *sehrī*. Ḥadrat went to his door and called out to him. The Maulwī Sāhib woke up with a fright, went outside and said: “Ḥadrat, why did you inconvenience yourself in coming to wake me up?” Ḥadrat replied: “I thought to myself that it seems as if Ḥabīb has fallen asleep. The time of *sehrī* will expire soon. If I do not wake him up, he will remain hungry the entire day.”

On numerous occasions when the *mu'adhdhin* had fallen asleep, Ḥadrat would silently go to the Musjid, call out the *adhān*, and return to his room. He would never ask the *mu'adhdhin*: “Why did you remain sleeping at the time of the *adhān*?”

Hadrat was soft-hearted and could not bear to see anyone in pain, regardless of whether the person was one of his own, or an outsider. Whenever he heard an exclamation of pain (Aah! Oh! etc.), he would become restless. Muḥammad 'Āshiq Nūrbāf's son was studying under Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib. He was a very slow learner. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib had taught him a specific lesson several times, and still he did not know it. [Out of frustration] Maulwī Sāhib gave him a hiding. When his screaming reached Hadrat's ears, Hadrat immediately got up from his bed and rushed out to rescue him. In his rush he did not see the wild-fig tree that was in the way, and struck it head-on with full force. This collision caused him severe pain for several days. He did not show his pain in the least, but advised Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib thus: "Bhāi! What is the benefit in beating children so much? If Allāh ﷻ has made the brain to learn only a certain amount, will the child learn any more if you beat him?"

Once Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib sprained his leg. Because of the sprain, Hadrat did not permit him to go home and kept him in his room. Whenever the masseur would come to massage his leg, Hadrat would sit near him and remain seated for as long as the masseur continued applying oil to his leg. Hadrat would repeatedly inquire about his condition and, in addition to providing his food and drink, he would see to all his other needs.

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's sincere treatment of his close friends was unparalleled. Once, Hadrat was already on the *muṣallā* (prayer mat) and about to lead the people in the 'asr ṣalāh when he heard someone from the back saying: "Maulwī Sāhib has arrived, Maulwī Sāhib has arrived!" Hadrat turned around and saw Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* approaching. He was the son of Hadrat's *ustād* (teacher). Because he had arrived on foot, his feet were quite dusty. The moment Imām Rabbānī saw him he stepped back from the *muṣallā* and asked: "Maulwī Sāhib, do you have *wuḍū*?" The Maulānā replied in the affirmative and stepped

onto the *musallā* with the same simplicity. When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's eyes fell on his feet, he noticed that the dust reached up to his shins. Hadrat held on to the front folds of his own clothes and started to dust the dust off the Maulānā's legs. The Maulānā was preoccupied with his own thoughts at the time and allowed Hadrat to continue dusting his feet. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī cleared all the dust. Later on, Hadrat said with much joy: "I was extremely pleased to be able to clean Maulwī Sāhib's feet, more so because he did not go into any formalities [and refuse]."

Together with piety and caution, Hadrat possessed a high level of frankness. No matter how much authority a person wielded or whose son the person was, if he disliked any of his actions, he would voice his opinion frankly, and expressly put an end to any bond between them.

Everyone was aware of Hadrat's special love for Nawāb Maḥmūd 'Alī Khān Sāhib Marhūm – the mayor of Chahtārī. The Nawāb Sāhib's affinity for Hadrat was the sole reason for this bond. Once the Nawāb Sāhib came from Arabia to India in order to organize his orphaned grand-son's municipality. As per the custom of the time, the other rulers were invited to meals and this was financed out of the municipality's income. However, some other expenses – which the Sharī'ah did not permit – were also paid for out of the same funds.

A few religious people, who were employed by the municipality and had contact with Imām Rabbānī, wrote to him and asked for his ruling regarding the status of their employment under such circumstances. Hadrat replied: "No one has the right to use an orphan's wealth in an unlawful manner, nor is it permissible to aid anyone in this regard. Thus, I do not approve of the fact that you are working for such employers. Allāh ﷻ is the Provider. If you leave your current employment, you will get a job elsewhere." Upon receiving this instruction from Hadrat, Hājī Daust Muḥammad

Khān, and other senior employees, immediately handed in their resignations. By virtue of Hadrat's *karāmat* and their confidence and firm faith in Hadrat, they did not remain unemployed. No sooner did they hand in their resignations than they were offered employment in another municipality.

During the course of organizing this municipality, Nawāb Sāhib Marhūm wrote to Hadrat informing him of his impending visit. Hadrat dictated a reply to his letter immediately: "What is the benefit of your visiting me when you will not be happy to meet me, nor will I be pleased to meet you? I heard that you are quite careless with the wealth of orphans. I am saddened by the fact that you will have to give an account for this in the Hereafter. As long as the orphan's municipality is not properly organised and protected according to the Sharī'ah, it is sufficient for you to meet me from a distance [to correspond with me in writing]."

Hadrat arrived from his house one day and entered his room [in the *khānqāh*]. He then asked about the identity of all those who were present in the room. When he learnt they were all his special and close associates, he seated himself and said: "You are all intelligent people. Let me tell you something." He then explained the meaning of a Hadīth, the gist of which was this: "When Allāh ﷻ will send all those who were destined for Hell to the Hell-fire, Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ will intercede. Allāh ﷻ will issue an Order saying: 'Very well, remove those who have *īmān* equal to a mustard seed.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ will remove many inmates from Hell. Allāh ﷻ will issue another Order: 'Remove those who have an iota of *īmān*.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ will remove many inmates from Hell. Allāh ﷻ will issue another Order: 'Remove those who have the slightest level of *īmān*.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ will remove many inmates from Hell. Allāh ﷻ will Order again: 'Remove those who have any part of *īmān*.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ will say: 'O Allāh! Now there is no one left in Hell who has any *īmān*.'

Allāh ﷻ will say: 'Very well, all those who were to intercede have

completed their intercession. Now, I am left.' Allāh ﷻ will remove three Handfuls of Hell-dwellers and send them to Paradise. We now have to ponder over those who were removed from Hell with Allāh's Hands. Obviously, they are not *kāfir*, because Allāh ﷻ already decreed for them to remain in Hell forever – and who can be more Truthful than Allāh ﷻ in Speech? Thus, these people are certainly people with *īmān*. But, their *īmān* was so concealed that even a sharp-sighted and perceptive Prophet like Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ could not identify them. He also considered them to be *kāfir* and left them in Hell. However, the All-Knowing Allāh, Who has knowledge of the most hidden things, also removed them from Hell by virtue of their intensely concealed and hidden *īmān*.

Now, if even such a concealed and hidden form of *īmān* is in some way or the other acceptable in Allāh's Sight and worthy of pardon and forgiveness, then brother, I do not have the courage to refer to anyone as a *kāfir*. Of what significance is our perception compared to the perception of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, due to which we can say that the person whom we consider to be a *kāfir* is most certainly a *kāfir* and not a believer? If we were to ponder over this Hadīth, I feel scared to even refer to a *kāfir* as a *kāfir*."

When Imām Rabbānī completed his detailed explanation of this Hadīth and the '*ulamā*' who were present were impressed by it, he said: "However, it is the order of the Sharī'ah to refer to a *kāfir* as a *kāfir*. Thus, what excuse do I have? If I see the signs of *kūfir* on a person, I will consider him to be a *kāfir* and refer to him as such." Hadrat was then silent, and thereafter he delved into another subject.

The explanation of the above Hadīth does not only affirm Imām Rabbānī's juristic acumen and his status as a *mujtahid*, but also displays his intelligence, his response to an intricate subject, his consideration of himself as being insignificant [known as modesty], his adherence to the Sharī'ah together with his recognition of Allāh

ﷺ, his willingness to uphold respect and carry out orders, and his special method of teaching and instructing 'ulamā'. His heart and body seemed to be equally affected by two opposite forces, and no single condition overpowered the other. On the one hand, he had reached a level of complete humility in his heart and total submission to Allāh's Absolute Independence [absolute humility and submission], while on the other hand, he had reached a state of perfection with regards to Sharī'ī diplomacy as well as in fulfilling his responsibility of guiding and instructing others [he was the one whom everyone referred to].

Who can understand and describe Imām Rabbānī's excellence? His heart's desire necessitated a certain level of solitude, focus and total engrossment in the remembrance and reflection of his Creator. At the same time, he was overpowered by the instruction to mingle with the people and to teach and guide them. His servitude to Allāh ﷻ demanded that [as the Urdu saying goes], "*a servant must fulfil his instruction, even though his heart is constantly being sliced by saws*" and he must never stray from his obedience to his Beloved [Allāh ﷻ]. Without a doubt, his heart was constantly calling out:

*It behoves me not to think of anything
besides You for even a second.
For, O my Beloved, I have no other beloved
besides You in both the worlds.*

At the same time, there is no doubt that every expression of his body exclaimed:

*All the knowledge that I have learnt
has been forgotten,
except for the Hadīth:
'Remember your Friend [Allāh].'*

He was certainly qualified to fulfil the vital responsibility which

had been placed upon his shoulders. He fulfilled this responsibility for forty years and demonstrated how his body had turned to instructing and tutoring the creation, while his heart had remained focussed on his Creator.

*My heart is in Your presence and is focussed towards You,
but my eyes are looking elsewhere
and at the things which are around me ...
So that none may become aware
of this secret which I am hiding ...
That my heart and my mind
are only enthralled and captivated by You!*

Maulwī Amīr Shāh Khān Sāhib once related a story to Hadrat: "I was sitting next to a *buzurg* in Musjid-e-Harām. A young ascetic came to him and sat down. The *buzurg* turned to him and said: 'Bhāi! You have a very good thing in your heart.' The poor fellow tried to conceal what was within him, but the *buzurg* lifted the veil from his heart and said: 'There is an image of a woman in your heart; her nose is like this, her eyes are like this and her hair is like this...' In short, he provided a full description of the woman. The ascetic was quite remorseful and said: 'You are certainly correct. I fell in love with a woman in the early stages of my youth. Because I used to think of her all the time, her image impressed itself upon my heart. Whenever I feel restless, I close my eyes and look at her. Then I experience some peace and I become restful.'"

After relating this story, Maulwī Amīr Shāh Khān Sāhib waited for Hadrat to say something, but he did not say anything. He remained silent. After the Maulwī Sāhib had raised the subject several times, Hadrat said: "Bhāi, this is not a very powerful condition because he had to close his eyes and turn his attention to his heart. I have had such a bond with my Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for many years. I would never do anything without his counsel, even though Hājī Sāhib was in Makkah. After him, I had the same

relationship with Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ for many years." Hadrat remained silent after saying this and did not say anything further. He remained silent with his head lowered. The meaning was obvious: He neither moved nor remained still without Allāh's Permission.

The excellences which Allāh ﷻ had bestowed upon Imām Rabbānī are really very intricate and difficult to understand. From amongst all his excellences, he possessed the excellence of being the embodiment of servitude and of being a believing servant – like all believers. He neither experienced restlessness, ecstasy, intoxication, bewilderment, enthusiastic love nor agitated yearning. He had a constant concern for following the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ. He remained immersed and absorbed in this during every moment of his life, and adhered tenaciously to the blessed way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This caused him to love a religious, Sharī'ah-adherent, Sunnah-loving person, and to hate an irreligious, sinful, Sunnah-opposing *bid'atī*. This became his natural inherent quality. Every part of his body proclaimed:

*I am an enemy of Your enemy ...
if [indeed] any enemy You have.
For Your enemy could only be
a Shayṭān, a Jinn, or insane!*

He constantly sought the glittering light of the day and the peaceful hours of the night, and spent them solely in the quest for the Pleasure of the Beloved. He considered the acquisition of this Pleasure to be dependent solely on emulating the ways and worship of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Since the Greatness and Magnitude of Allāh ﷻ was firmly embedded in every vein of his body, he was, in most cases, overcome by emotion whenever he recited the Qur'ān. Such emotion would become manifest when there was no one else

present during the course of his recitation. During the latter portion of the night, when he stood before his Master in his empty room to recite the Qur'ān in *nafl ṣalāh*, he would be overcome by weeping. He would pause constantly. His voice would fail him, and his crying would compel him into silence. Tears would flow from his eyes, roll down his cheeks, pass through his beard, and fall like pearls upon the *muṣallā*.

He would not suffice with the mere acquisition of manifestations and cognition which arose from his recitation of the Verses of Allāh ﷻ. Instead, a peculiar condition, corresponding with the topic of the verses, would pervade every part of his body. Whenever he read the verses of Mercy and promises of Forgiveness, hope and joy would cause him to glow. Whenever he read verses of Allāh's Wrath and warnings of Punishment, his body would tremble and shiver. Whenever he read verses of Allāh's Greatness and Independence, his head would lower by itself and it would seem as if he was diminishing and disappearing before Allāh's Greatness. Whenever he read the verses of dread and terror, his hair would stand on end and it would seem as though he were falling to the ground out of fear.

This natural response which Hadrat experienced would sometimes be transferred to others and those who were following him in *ṣalāh* would also experience similar conditions. Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Khaurjawī relates: "When I went to Gangoh during Ramadān, Hadrat used to lead us in the *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh*. One night, he commenced the *tarāwīḥ* while I was also present in the congregation. As he was reading the Qur'ān, he reached a section where Allāh ﷻ instils fear and dread [into one's heart]. Less than half the congregation understood Arabic while the remainder did not know Arabic at all. Despite this, the fear which he experienced while reciting this section had an effect on the entire congregation. Some were crying, others were trembling, some became restless, while others were gasping for breath. He completed this section and

continued to the following section in which Allāh's Mercy was mentioned. The entire congregation was suddenly overcome with joy. Their previous condition [of fear] was replaced with a condition of joy within a matter of moments – to such an extent that some of them could not prevent themselves from smiling and laughing.

This world is a journey. The entire creation has boarded a ship and is traversing this journey. The travellers of the Hereafter – the *Ahlullāh* – show special kindness and affection towards their fellow travellers. This is, in itself, the unique merit and excellence of the *Ahlullāh*. Although Imām Rabbānī had detached his heart from all types of love apart from the love for Allāh ﷻ, the love which he had for Allāh's Creation and his pious associates probably surpassed the deep love which a father has for his son.

Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib Murādābādī was in the habit of spending Ramadān in Gangoh, but he fell ill one year and could not do so. On several occasions Ḥadrat asked: "Why did Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥassan not come? I wonder what is the reason?" Eventually, when a few people from Murādābād departed, he said to them: "Convey my *salām* to Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥasan and tell him to inform me about himself and his associates as soon as possible because I have been thinking of him."

On one occasion Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib and his wife departed for Kāndhla. She was expecting at the time and approaching the time of delivery. The rough ox-wagon ride caused her to miscarry along the way.

When a *khādim* informed Ḥadrat of this, tears flowed spontaneously from his eyes and he read this couplet in a very grieved tone:

Why did we have to suffer this calamity?

*O garden of love, may you be destroyed!
[It is this love which has caused me to suffer such pain].*

Although *khādims* served and attended to Hadrat for their own spiritual benefit, he considered them to be his benefactors and always expressed his gratitude and appreciation to them. A *khādim* once asked him for his old clothing. He wanted it as a *tabarruk* (source of blessing). He said: "Bhāi! For quite some time I have not been in possession of any used clothing. By Allāh's Blessings, people constantly give me new clothes. I wear it once, and then they take it away and give me another set. This continues most of the time. Whatever I am wearing at present was given to me by Dr. 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib."

Nawāb Mahmūd 'Alī Khān Sāhib had probably given a Rs 100 note to Hadrat in private. Hadrat came outside and announced: "Nawāb Sāhib has given me such and such an amount of money." When the Nawāb Sāhib lowered his head [in embarrassment], Hadrat said: "Bhāi, if a person does good to another, must he not express it?"

The truth of the matter is that this bankrupt author [Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī is referring to himself] cannot fulfil the duty of expressing Hadrat's academic and practical excellences. In short, if the pure *ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ is considered to be the sky, we would have to consider Hadrat to be its glittering star. If the pure Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ is considered to be the vast ocean, we would have to consider Hadrat to be its unique pearl. This is the essence of all his excellences, and this is the excellence which Allāh's accepted servants consider to be the pinnacle of all objectives and the fundamental quest.

وَذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

"This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows on whomever He Wills. Allāh is Possessor of Mighty Grace."

PHYSICAL KARĀMĀT

*The Auliya' (friends) of Allāh
have been granted such power
that they are able to return an arrow to its bow
after it has been fired.*

*Due to the rest of humanity
they stand firm in this world of means [cause and effect].*

*Though the Walī (friend), through the Power of Allāh,
seems regretful and helpless ...
Yet, He takes the one in despair
and opens the door of knowledge and recognition for him
at [the feet of] His friends.*

*For them, neither does the fire burn the grid
nor [does it burn] the kabab ...
For them, grief and happiness are all from Allāh
and they are pleased (radhī) under every condition.*

A *karāmat* is an extraordinary or supernatural feat, performed by a believer who adheres to the Sunnah and is perfect in his *taqwā*. It is not necessary for a *walī* – who is the outward means [agency] for the manifestation of that supernatural act or *karāmat* – to even have knowledge of the *karāmat* itself, nor is it necessary that it should be performed by his will and intention. A *karāmat* can be performed in the presence of both knowledge and will, but sometimes it may occur in the absence of both. Sometimes knowledge of it may be present, while no intention exists.

There are two types of *karāmat* – physical and spiritual. The masses only know the physical *karāmat* and consider this to be the only type of *karāmat*. Consequently, *karāmat* has been confined to supernatural feats which are astounding in appearance, such as

reading minds [telepathy], walking on water or flying, and so forth. However, the scholars consider spiritual *karāmāt* to be the genuine and true *karāmāt*.

In order to distinguish this from the physical type of *karāmāt*, it is referred to as a *kamāl* (perfection, excellence). Examples of such spiritual *karāmāt* [or *kamāl*] are: When a person remains steadfast in the Sharī'ah, when he is the embodiment of noble character, when he spontaneously does good deeds, when his heart is pure from reprehensible habits, and when he does not spend a single moment in heedlessness [of Allāh ﷻ]. This category of *karāmāt* does not contain the possibility of *istidrāj*³⁶ (respite) and it is an unequalled and unique condition.

After having enumerated Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's spiritual excellences, I do not feel like writing about physical *karāmāt* because I feel that it is futile to discuss the inferior in the presence of the superior. However, the very name of the biography compels me to present a certain amount of information on every aspect of his life to the reader. For this reason I am forced to present a few stories which would serve as examples.

It is shameful to light a small lamp in the presence of the brilliant shining sun. Similarly, when writing about the lofty rank of the star of the era and the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ [Imām Rabbānī

³⁶ This word is commonly translated as "respite" but it has a much deeper meaning. Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* says that, when Allāh ﷻ applies *istidrāj* to a person, it means: "He draws him near to destruction, little by little; He brings him near to punishment by degrees, by means of respite, the continuance of health, and the increase of favour."

The *Tāj al-'Arūs* explains *istidrāj* thus: "He [Allāh ﷻ] bestows upon him new favours as often as he commits new wrong actions, and causes him to forget to ask for forgiveness [thus leading him by degrees to perdition]." (*Lane's Lexicon*, vol. 3, p. 868)

rahimahullāh], it is regretful to write about supernatural feats which are really totally insignificant when compared to the fundamental objective of *wilāyat* – namely proximity to Allāh ﷻ.

The essential *karāmat* of Imām Rabbānī was the firmly embedded condition of his heart which made him a sincere seeker of Allāh's ﷻ Pleasure. The result of this quest was his emulation of the Sunnah in whose form his habits, conditions and practices were moulded. Obviously, divesting himself of his own will in the presence of Allāh's ﷻ Will entails true and sincere love for Allāh ﷻ.

What is Ishq (intense love)?

Say: [It is] to become the slave of the Beloved.

*It is to place your feet into the Hands of another,
and to place your hands into the Hands of another.
[and to allow the Beloved to control you.]*

The yearning for this love is the true comfort which fortunate people have been blessed with. All the events of this world, and all incidents of joy and sorrow occur by the Will of Allāh ﷻ. Consequently, they take place in accordance with His Approval. A true lover's quest is therefore the same as that [Will] of the True Beloved. What, then, can be written about such pure souls? How can a person fathom or expose the mysteries behind their sincere, true love and devotion?

Break the pen!

Get rid of the ink!

Burn the paper and hold your breath!

*O Hamīd (name of the poet),
this tale is about Ishq (intense love)
and it cannot be expressed or contained on paper.*

I have previously discussed some of the fruits of this love. Amongst

them are the habits and characteristics of the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷺ. [They are imbued with] wisdom, modesty; chastity; contentment; abstinence; asceticism; piety; bashfulness; elegance; distinction; bravery; integrity; steadfastness; courage; dignity; purity; satisfaction and obedience to all the injunctions of the Sharī'ah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. [Towards others they exhibit] a willingness to pardon, forbearance; restraint; patience; tolerance; love; a smiling expression; a pleasing appearance, helpfulness; kindness; generosity; consideration; big-heartedness; affection; desiring good for others; honesty and sound dealings – in someone's presence, as well as his absence. These are all branches of this one fundamental. When all these good qualities become so firmly embedded in a person that it becomes his second nature and fixed trait, it is called *istiqāmah* (steadfastness) and the Sufis consider this to be above *karāmat*.

*The whole world has been caught in the web of 'means'
due to which they have gone astray.
Very few are aware of the Divine Mysteries.*

*They say: "We are human, and so they (the Ahlullāh)
and we all eat and sleep in a similar manner!"
Due to their blindness they cannot differentiate
between the 'friends of Allāh'
and the 'people of this world.'*

*The food which is eaten by the 'people of this world'
is excreted in the form of impurity and waste,
and the food which is eaten by the 'friends of Allāh'
turns into Nūr (light) that enlightens their souls (Rūh).*

*The reason for this is that they endure great hardship
in order to acquire pure, halaal sustenance
in which there is no doubt.*

*They prefer starvation rather than consuming
even a morsel of doubtful food or rather than begging.*

Allāh ﷻ had endowed Imām Rabbānī with a full treasure of these priceless jewels. What, then, would be the significance in mentioning his physical *karāmāt*? He was the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and a star of guidance and instruction. He neither possessed the excitement and enthusiasm which was, and is, visible amongst the average *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ, nor did he experience states of ecstasy, trance, trembling and restlessness – something which the masses consider to be [the sign of] *wilāyat* and an excellence in itself. His excellence lay in the fact that his condition appeared to be very ordinary.

*Don't compare the chaste ones to yourselves
even though 'milk' and 'lion' may be written
in exactly the same way.³⁷*

The greatest *karāmat* of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī – which continues even after his demise – is the fact that those who hold on to his teachings during these tumultuous times are in actual fact holding on to the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ with both their hands. It is they who have *īmān* in this with all their hearts:

O Sa'di (name of poet)!
*It is impossible that you tread on the path of truth and purity
unless you comply with, and follow,
the Sunnah of Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ*

If the lowest amongst his *murīds*, the weakest in his actions, and the one immersed in this world due to the desires of his soul (*nafs*), is

³⁷ In the English language, two words may be spelt in exactly the same way, yet have two opposite meanings. This is the same in the Persian language. In Persian, *milk* and *lion* are spelt exactly the same.

firm in his knowledge and holds on to *tauḥīd* (One-ness of Allāh ﷻ) and *risālat* (belief in the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ) with all his heart, he realises that, if there is any sign of guidance and prosperity, it lies solely in following the Sharī'ah.

*He who does not find the straight path
to the Sunnah of Muḥammad ﷺ
will forever be deprived
of the Straight Path [Sīrāṭ al Mustaqīm].*

He also realises that, if illumination (*nūr*) and happiness is not obtained from the Sharī'ah, then it is a deception and an evil whispering (*waswasah*), and if any supernatural feat is not accomplished in the shade of emulating the Sunnah, then it is *istidrāj*.

*Anything which is against the demands of Sharī'ah
is an evil suggestion (waswasah) from Shayṭān.
None has ever disagreed regarding this.*

The Sharī'ah is promulgated for the realization of this *ḥaqīqah* (reality). Thus it was also a great bounty for Imām Rabbānī's associates to be steadfast in this regard – both with their hearts and bodies – and an associate could acquire this great bounty by merely visiting *Ḥadrat* once in his lifetime with love and sincerity, showing his quest and yearning. This is no small bounty from Allāh ﷻ. Truth be told, it is the essence of *wilāyat*, while deeds and acts of obedience are its subsidiaries and fruits.

*Whoever firmly holds on to the hem of the Sharī'ah ...
for him Allāh makes the Straight Path apparent.*

If we were to ponder and reflect, *Ḥadrat*'s mere presence seemed to be the embodiment of *karāmat* because he became well-known throughout India and the rest of the world for his exceptional

knowledge and lofty rank, despite the fact that he remained in solitude and aloof from the public, and despite the fact that he lived in a small town under difficult conditions, leading a simple and ascetic life. This also in spite of his own efforts to conceal himself and remain anonymous. The masses and 'ulamā' [alike], collectively reverted to him. Publicity and crowds of people used to agitate him, while Allāh's Creation considered it an honour to lay their lives and wealth at his feet. The more he withdrew from people, the more they were attracted towards him.

Many servants of Allāh ﷺ left their homes and families and considered it 'kingship and royalty' to live as paupers in his service. They gave preference to [spending] one hour of his companionship over remaining with their wives and families at home. They were all well aware of the fact that there were no material comforts at his place, and that there were no special affiliations or displays of affection in his court. Despite this, the affluent and the poor, the noble and the layman, the senior and the junior – all felt greatly attracted to him and hastened to acquire the good fortune of visiting him.

Allāh ﷻ Alone knows the nature of the magnetic attraction which caused their hearts to be involuntarily drawn towards him. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows the nature of this internal spiritual power – which was the fruit of his *karāmat* – that caused people from different parts of the world to flock in droves to this village. When the residents of the district [Sahāranpūr] were informed about this [phenomenon], they were astonished that people knew about Gangoh, yet they knew nothing about Sahāranpūr. Even if they did hear of Sahāranpūr, they considered it to be second to Gangoh – as though Sahāranpūr were the village and Gangoh were the district.

Not only every year of his life, but every month and every day of his life was a *karāmat* in its own right. Hadrat's ascetic lifestyle, the protection of his life and wealth, the failure of his opponents in

their plots to harm him, and his immediate rise and progress in his objectives, accompanied by the deprivation and defeat of the *bid'atīs* in their wicked plots – are all included amongst his *karāmāt*. However, because of their spiritual nature [his *karāmāt*], it is difficult for the masses to understand them.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib relates: "I asked Hadrat's opinion regarding whether I should keep my property or not. He said: 'If you keep it, you will be acting on *rukhsah* (concession). If you do not keep it, Allāh ﷻ will never cause you distress regarding your sustenance.' Consequently, I am definitely not worthy of the comfort in which I am living at present. This is a clear *karāmat* of Hadrat. We can call it a physical *karāmat* if he had *kashf* (exposition) in this regard. We can also call it a spiritual *karāmat* if he had said this after placing his full reliance upon Allāh ﷻ. Such reliance would be a thousand times greater *karāmat* than *kashf*." (Hadrat Thānwī's statement ends here.)

Al-hamdulillāh, thumma al-hamdulillāh, since Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī] left his employment at Jāmi' al-'Ulūm Kānpūr relinquished the monthly Rs 100 salary in exchange for placing his full trust and reliance upon the limitless treasures of Allāh ﷻ, he never experienced a continuation of any need, nor did he experience any poverty. At the same time he also washed his hands of his family income. This was with regard to his worldly comfort. As for his spiritual comfort and internal condition ... it is beyond description! No one can ask him about the unending treasure which Allāh ﷻ had blessed him with, nor can the Maulānā give an answer to it. However, one thing is obvious:

*With your Friend (Allāh),
even poverty is an Orchard and Garden (Jannah).
Without your Friend (Allāh),
all wealth and honour is dirt and earth (thus useless).*

There are thousands of similar incidents in which both physical and spiritual *karāmāt* were displayed, but I have no inclination to relate them [all]. Why should I relate them? After all, there are those who were present at the time [who saw it], and others who had witnessed numerous incidents of this nature during the course of Hadrat's tutoring and counselling.

A blind person once came to Hadrat's *khānqāh* and went to extremes in expressing his devotion and yearning to visit Hadrat. He added: "I came walking all the way from Meerut to Gangoh solely to learn how to remember Allāh ﷻ." Others in the *khānqāh* were quite impressed by his devoted yearning and did as much as they could to see to his needs. When the *adhān* was called and Hadrat proceeded to the Musjid, this person extended his hand to shake hands with Hadrat. Hadrat jerked his hand away and remained aloof.

The man continued expressing the sincerity of his quest and his long-time wish to visit Hadrat, but Hadrat did not even accord this talkative, and apparently devoted person the same attention which is accorded to a detached outsider. The person himself was surprised, but he did not have the courage to say anything. A few of Hadrat's devoted associates interceded on his behalf and conveyed the blind man's distress and loss of hope, but Hadrat did not even approve of their intercession and angrily remarked: "Why are you speaking about a matter which does not concern you? If you look at his heart, you will find it filled with this world."

No one had the courage to say anything after this, and the blind man eventually left. About ten to twelve days later, the usual 'urs was held in Gangoh. The blind man was also present at this 'urs. He was really enjoying himself and going into trance upon trance in the *qawwālī*. Sufī Karam Husayn Sāhib – who had witnessed the beginning of this person's story [when he first arrived at Hadrat's *khānqāh*] and had been surprised [at Hadrat's treatment of him] –

was extremely shocked when he witnessed the condition of this blind man at the time of the 'urs. The moment he had the opportunity, he went to him and said: "Miyā! Where has all your yearning and love for Hadrat gone to? How have you fallen into all this commotion and enjoyment?"

At least the poor person was honest. He said: "Brother, these are the activities of my fellow friends. I thought that if I could impress your Miyā Sāhib [referring to Hadrat], I would have been able to live with him for free for a few days and then, as soon as the 'urs commenced, I would join in. As for my desire and yearning to meet him ... [that was merely a ruse]. I am just a drifter, and this is how I pass my days."

*Neither the servant, nor the one being served
can spend (his) life in happiness.
Happiness (in reality) can never be achieved
without good character and Ikhlāas (sincerity).*

*When the entire body is covered in scars
and is covered in boils and rash,
then where are you supposed to put the cottonwool
(bandages)?*

When Nadwatul 'Ulamā' initially came into existence in all its glory, Muslims in general, and many sincere servants of Allāh ﷻ in particular, felt a need for such an institution. They approved of it, accepted its advantages, and chose to join it. Although many efforts were made to appoint him as the chairman, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī did not agree. Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad 'Alī Sāhib, the *nāzim* (administrator) of Nadwah, intended going to Gangoh with a request to obtain Hadrat's approval, but when he reached Deoband, Hadrat sent a message to him [stating]: "Do not [even] think of coming to Gangoh with this purpose in mind because I will never join. If you wish to discuss the matter, you may discuss it with

Maulānā Maḥmūd Ḥasan Sāhib in Deoband, or with Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib in Sahāranpūr."

The *nāzim* Sāhib eventually had to return [home] from Sahāranpūr. Ḥadrat and his associates did not join [the organisation]. No one doubted the lofty goals and objectives of Nadwatul 'Ulamā' at the time. Therefore, some of Ḥadrat's associates asked him to permit his son and Ḥadrat Maulānā Deobandī to attend Nadwatul 'Ulamā's annual *jalsah*. Ḥadrat warned them in writing: "I have been informed that its consequences will not be good. That is why I will not permit anyone from my side to attend."

How many of us know that a certain action which starts off looking promising, is going to change for the worse soon thereafter? In order to perceive such matters, one requires either finely tuned insight, or *kashf* (exposition) and *ilhām* (Divine Inspiration). Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī Sāhib had to resign after some time. Those Muslims who adhered firmly to the Sunnah [soon] realised that the thing which had attracted them towards Nadwah no longer existed. The objectives were one thing, but the fruits were something completely different. The purpose was one thing, but the result was something else.

A mad person saw the spring and said:

"It is cold (winter)!"

He saw a rose inside a glass and said:

"It is a drink!"

*Every person, through the tongue of circumstance,
reveals his secret.*

*Every person's movement is created from where he stands.
(i.e. each person acts according to his understanding.)*

Maulwī Radā 'Alī Sāhib Barelwī was Ḥadrat's student. He relates: During my student days, I had taken the responsibility of preparing

Hadrat's tea after his meals. One afternoon I was preparing his tea while it was almost passed his tea-time. I left quickly with the teapot and rushed to the *khānqāh*. A few friends were sitting on the bed, eating some sweetmeats which Hadrat had given to them. They invited me to join them but, since Hadrat had already partaken of his meal at home and had returned to his room, I proceeded to his room instead. At the same time, I thought to myself: 'See, Hadrat did not even think of me when he gave sweetmeats to these people.' After giving Hadrat's tea to him, I returned to my room and lay down. However, my human weakness constantly made me think that I was Hadrat's *khādim* and yet he had forgotten to offer me some sweetmeats! A few moments later Hadrat stood near the Musjid and called for me. I became quite anxious and hurriedly went outside, but I saw Hadrat standing against the Musjid wall with sweetmeats in his hand. When I reached him, he handed the sweetmeats to me saying: 'Here, eat this.' Then he returned to his room. I really regretted my thoughts, and for several weeks I felt ashamed of appearing in front of Hadrat. I thought to myself that Hadrat must be thinking that I am a very selfish and greedy person."

A poet says:

*When attendants are not present at the time,
set aside their share and give it to them later.
This is the Sunnah of the best of creations ...
[Muhammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ].*

Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib relates: "During my stay in Gangoh, a friend visited me while I was serving as Hadrat's *khādim*. When I took him to meet Hadrat, he asked: 'Why have you come here?' Usually, when a person goes to visit a *buzurg*, he expresses himself as though he had come for the sake of *Dīn*. So my friend replied: 'I have come to pledge *bay'ah*.' Hadrat was not satisfied with this answer and said: 'Tell me the truth, what is your motive for coming here?' He was an honest person and said: 'Hadrat, the truth is that I

am quite troubled over a court case. I have come for your *du'ā's* for success in the court case.' Hadrat was very impressed by his honesty and, in a pleased tone, he said: 'Yes, you have now spoken like a true Muslim.' Hadrat then enquired about the background and nature of the court case and promised to make *du'ā'* for him.

Later on, Hadrat called for him and said: 'I just completed reciting the Qur'ān and I made *du'ā'* for you. I hope Allāh ﷻ gives you success.' This friend stayed over for one day. The following day he said to me: 'Karam Husayn, I have won the case. Now make me a *murīd* as well.' I took him to Hadrat and said: 'Hadrat, this is my friend. If you accept his *bay'ah*, I will consider it to be a favour to me.' Hadrat initiated him immediately and addressed me thus: 'I accepted his *bay'ah* out of consideration to you, but he will not be able to do anything.' My friend departed and a few days later I heard that the court had ruled in his favour. However, he was not able to adhere to any of Hadrat's teachings and instructions."

Once Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was in Deoband. Maulwī Husayn Sharīf Madrasī, who was also Hadrat's student, prepared four cups of tea and, with much enthusiasm, he brought the teapot to Hadrat. He saw that the place was suddenly filled with many people – most of whom were '*ulamā*' and Maulwī Husayn Sharīf's teachers. He was at a loss [as there were only four cups of tea]. He did not know to whom he should serve tea to and to whom he should not. Eventually he decided that he would give the tea to the seniors and sneak out quietly. He took the teapot and sat down on the threshold. Hadrat called out: "Maulwī Husayn Sharīf! Start offering the tea from one side." Although Hadrat's instruction caused him great concern, he felt it essential to carry out his order. He poured the tea into one cup after the other and began distributing it from one side. There were about twenty to twenty-five people present at the time. They all drank from the tea and when he opened the teapot, there was still some tea left over.

Before departing for his hometown, this same Maulwī Husayn Sharīf Sāhib arrived in Gangoh and said to Hadrat: "I have only twenty-five rupees [in my possession] for my journey and my home is far away. Hadrat gave him two rupees and placed them in his purse. Then Hadrat instructed him not to turn his purse upside-down when taking out any money from it. The Maulwī Sāhib departed and reached his home. When he calculated the amount he had spent during his journey, it worked out to seventy rupees, yet there were still a few rupees left in his purse. [Then] his brother turned the purse upside down and took out all the money. The money was spent, and his purse remained empty.

Hadrat's nephew, Maulwī 'Azīz ar-Rahmān Sāhib, relates: "There was a marriage in our family which I attended. After the *jumu'ah salāh*, when the *nikāh* was performed, my relatives insisted that I should distribute the dry dates. I was sitting near Hadrat. I refused, but they persisted. I eventually excused myself by saying that I do not know how to count and distribute. [Then] Hadrat said: 'So what? Distribute them as you like.' I got up and started distributing handfuls of dates to all who were present. I was distributing [the dates] amongst those who were present inside the Musjid, while another person was distributing outside the Musjid. When he saw me distributing with both my hands full, he said to me: 'What are you doing? Don't give out so many!' I immediately left the dates and sat down, saying: 'You see, I told you I cannot count and distribute.' The number of dates which I was given would not have been enough for all the people. I do not know where the blessings came from, because I distributed them to numerous people and when I stopped distributing, there was still the same amount – or only slightly less."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was in the habit of adjusting all the clocks in his room according to the sundial. On one occasion the weather remained heavily overcast for several days and thus he could not adjust the clocks. Maulwī 'Alī Radā Sāhib – who was one of

Hadrat's students – relates: "It was partly cloudy during one of those [overcast] days and the sun would appear at times. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī left his room before mid-day, lay down beneath the canopy which was to the left of his room, and said to me: 'Go and stand next to the sundial and inform me when it is twelve noon.' I stood next to the sundial. No clouds were covering the sun at the time. The shadow was just about to fall on the line when a long, wide cloud covered the sun. I became nervous and said: 'Hadrat, the sun has disappeared.' Hadrat got up immediately, held the watch in his hand and stood near the sundial. The moment he came to stand there, the cloud suddenly moved away. Hadrat adjusted his watch and returned to his room. I was left astounded because the dense clouds had given the impression that the sun would not appear for at least ten to fifteen minutes, but the moment he stood near the sundial, the cloud moved away from the sun and behaved like a woman who lifts the veil from her face."

Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib relates: "I was in Hadrat's presence when I received a letter from a friend. He wrote to me to inform me of his apprehension regarding a court case from which he sees no escape, and he requested that I should ask Hadrat to make *du'ā'* for him. I related this to Hadrat. He enquired about the background of the case with utmost affection. Then he said: 'You must console him. *Inshā Allāh*, he will be absolved.' Subsequently, although he was quite scared and had given up hope [of a positive outcome], he was absolved."

Munshī Akhtar Jamīl Sāhib relates: "I received a serious subpoena against me. During the course of this case, I had the honour of pledging *bay'ah* to Hadrat. Some extremely serious accusations had been leveled against me because of the enmity of some of my opponents. I had lost all hope of freedom [not being convicted]. After pledging *bay'ah* to Hadrat, I expressed my distress and despondency to him. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī pondered for some time and said: 'Continue reading *حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ* until the verdict is

arrived at. When Hadrat said this, I naturally felt that there would be a delay in the verdict. The case eventually lasted an entire year, but – *al-hamdulillāh* – it turned out to be in my favour.”

Hadrat shared a special bond with Nawāb Maḥmūd ‘Alī Khān Sāhib Marḥūm, the governor of Chehtārī. This was due to the latter’s sincerity and attachment to him. At one point he fell seriously ill and lost consciousness. Everyone lost hope of his survival. A person was sent from Chehtārī to Gangoh with the sole purpose of obtaining Hadrat’s *du‘ā*’s in favour of the Nawāb Sāhib. When the person arrived, he described the Nawāb Sāhib’s condition to Hadrat and requested his *du‘ā*’s, whereupon Hadrat addressed everyone present, saying: “Bhāi, make *du‘ā*’.” Since Hadrat did not personally promise to make *du‘ā*’, the person became concerned and asked Hadrat to make *du‘ā*’. Hadrat said: “The matter has already been decided and just a few days of his life remains.”

Upon hearing this, there remained no room for any further discussion and everyone lost hope in the Nawāb Sāhib’s survival. The messenger nevertheless added: “Hadrat make *du‘ā*’ that the Nawāb Sāhib regains consciousness so that he may be able to make whatever bequests and arrangements necessary for his municipality.” Hadrat said: “Very well, there is no harm in making such a *du‘ā*’.” Hadrat made *du‘ā*’ and said: “*Inshā Allāh*, he will regain consciousness.” Subsequently, the Nawāb Sāhib suddenly regained consciousness. He became so vividly conscious that news of his recovery and well-being started to spread far and wide. No one even thought of that which was about to occur. His condition suddenly took a turn for the worse and the magnanimous, open-hearted and generous Nawāb Sāhib passed away. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib was living in the *khānqāh* when he suddenly experienced an excruciating pain in his ribs. He became very worried, presented himself before his spiritual physician and

expressed his pain and discomfort.

Hadrat was on his way to the bathroom at the time. While walking, he said: "*Inshā Allāh*, the pain will disappear and never return." Before Hadrat could even complete his sentence, the pain disappeared and – *al-hamdulillāh* – he never experienced such pain again.

On one occasion, Hadrat Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib rahimahullāh fell ill. When his friends and associates heard the news, they became worried and asked Hadrat to make *du'ā'*. He remained silent and deferred the matter. When the same request was made a second time, he consoled them saying: "Miyā, he is not going to die now and, if he does, it will be after me." Thus he recovered from his illness. During Shawwāl of the same year in which Hadrat passed away, he departed [from India] in order to perform *hajj*. He fell ill in Makkah Mu'azzamah, proceeded to 'Arafāt in his sickly condition, and eventually passed away at the beginning of Muḥarram. He was buried in Jannatul Mu'allā. May Allāh ﷻ shower him with His Mercy. Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib passed away about seven months after the demise of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī.

The perfumer, Mīr Maḥbūb 'Alī Sāhib Dehlawī, had maternal relatives in Gangoh. His maternal grandmother (*nānī*) decided to transfer [ownership of] her house to her two daughters. Due to the fact that there was no revenue office in Gangoh, she had to go to Nakaur in order to register the property. The weak and frail old woman found it extremely difficult to undertake such a journey and was constantly worried about it. She eventually asked for paper and recorded the transfer of the property. Only the registration remained. She plucked up the courage and prepared herself for the journey.

It so happened that, on the day of her departure, she started to

experience diarrhoea and vomiting. This condition became quite critical and caused her hands and legs to swell. After some time the diarrhoea stopped, but she suffered from pain in her stomach. She became very weak and it became difficult for her to get up from her bed.

On the one hand, Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib Dehlawī was concerned about his grandmother's illness, while on the other hand he was worried about the important transfer papers and the delay in the transfer. Overcome by all these concerns, he presented himself before Hadrat and explained the situation to him. Hadrat said: "Go and give her some *jawārish* (a digestive medicine). It will provide her some relief." Mīr Sāhib returned home immediately and gave her the *jawārish*. His grandmother experienced relief that very same night and, by the time she woke up the following morning, she had recovered completely. She walked to the conveyance, boarded it and reached Nakaur safe and sound. She completed all the paper work and returned to Gangoh that same day. She undertook this lengthy journey without experiencing any fatigue at all.

Maulwī Mīr Jahān Shāh is presently [at the time of writing this book] the *mudarris-e-awwal* head of department at Madrasah Islāmīyyah in Aden. [At one point] he studied under Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib at Mazāhir al-'Ulūm. He was suddenly overcome with the desire to perform hajj and told Hadrat Maulānā: "If you permit me, I will also go to the Haramayn Sharīfayn." Hadrat Maulānā replied: "Go to Gangoh and ask Hadrat for permission. You have my permission if he grants his permission."

He went to Gangoh and expressed his intention. Everyone was aware that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would certainly ask the person if he had sufficient money to cover his expenses. He did this whenever he received such requests. He would never permit the person to go if he did not have the necessary money [to cover his

costs]. He would [always] say to him: "It is not permissible to go after begging from people. If you do not have the provisions for the journey, what benefit is there in going?" However, [contrary to his usual practice] Hadrat did not ask Maulwī Mīr Jahān Shāh Sāhib anything in this regard. He merely said: "You may go. Allāh ﷻ will make everything easy for you."

Maulwī Mīr Jahān Shāh Sāhib happily returned [to Sahāranpūr] and departed for the Hijāz. When he boarded the train he had a total of fifteen rupees to his name. He was a very bashful and modest person by nature and would not even sit next to a person who was having a meal – not even if it was his closest friend. How could he ever ask anyone for anything or express his need to anyone? He reached Makkah Mu'azzamah from where he proceeded on foot to Madīnah Munawwarah, with only one companion. Eventually, six months after his departure from India, he returned safe and sound to Sahāranpūr. A few months later, a request arrived for someone to accept the post of *mudarris-e-awwal* in Aden. No one was prepared to go so far [away], but Maulwī Mīr Jahān Shāh Sāhib accepted the post. Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib bid him farewell and – *al-hamdulillāh* – he still resides there.

Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān, a resident of Ābha, was a sincere *khādim* of Hadrat. His son, who was four or five years old at the time, fell extremely ill. To add to this difficulty, the boy was refusing to take any medication. Although he was critically ill, he would scream, cry and refuse to open his mouth the moment he saw any medication. This only complicated matters and caused much concern to his relatives. In this worried condition the Maulwī Sāhib wrote a letter to Hadrat. Hadrat gave him a *ta'wīdh* and asked him to inform him about his son's condition the following day. As soon as the *ta'wīdh* was tied to the boy, the illness was dispelled.

About ten days later, Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān Sāhib seated his son on a horse and they left for Gangoh. Hadrat kissed the child

and asked the father to make him lie down on the bed. The boy still had traces of a cough. Hadrat went into his room and returned with a few seeds. Then he sat down on the bed next to the boy, and with sincere affection, addressed him by his name, saying: "Shafiq! These are seeds which are neither sweet nor sour. Eat them up."

The boy, who previously used to shout upon hearing the mere mention of a medicine's name, opened his mouth immediately and Hadrat placed the seeds in his mouth with his blessed hand. The boy swallowed the seeds without wincing. Hadrat then handed a few tablets to the boy's father and instructed him to give it to his son for a few consecutive days. After this incident, the boy never refused to take any medication again.

Mir Mahbūb 'Alī Dehlawī's father ran into debt. He tried his utmost to pay it off but could not find a way out [of this difficulty]. On one hand, the [stock in his] shop was diminishing and on the other hand, his debts were increasing. He eventually lost all courage and became very despondent. Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib could not bear seeing his father's agony. He wrote a letter to Hadrat saying: "The season to replenish the goods has already arrived and my father is still caught up in debt. If Hadrat makes du'ā', there is hope for some relief." By Allāh's Power, all his debts were paid off within a short time, the goods were replenished in time for the new season, and no one knew where the money had come from.

An illness was spreading amongst the horses in Ābha and two mares suddenly died. Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Sāhib also had a horse which he had personally reared and tended to and to which he was greatly attached. The illness affected his horse as well and it suddenly lost all its vigour and vitality. Its ears remained floppy, and everyone who saw it commented that it was ill. He became very worried, mounted it and proceeded towards Gangoh. It moved at a very slow pace. At times it would not raise its hind leg, while at other times it would not raise its front leg. The Maulwī Sāhib was

very concerned and felt sure that he would soon lose his horse. After completing the *jumu'ah salāh*, he said to Hadrat: "I have a horse which I ride whenever I need to go anywhere. I have come to Gangoh on it as well. It has fallen ill."

Hadrat asked: "Is there any illness amongst the horses at present?" He replied: "Hadrat, two horses belonging to two Pathāns have died recently." Hadrat said: "Very well, tie a *ta'wīdh* and Allāh ﷻ will show His Grace." Hadrat then addressed Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib saying: "Maulwī Yahyā, give him a *ta'wīdh* for the horse." Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān Sāhib tied the *ta'wīdh* to his horse, mounted it and departed. He immediately noticed an improvement in his horse's condition. One or two days later, it had recovered completely and was back to its previous healthy condition. A week later he returned to Gangoh. Hadrat asked him: "Miyā, is the horse okay now?" He replied: "Yes Hadrat, it is completely healthy." Hadrat asked: "Is its sluggishness also gone?" He replied: "Yes, it is completely gone. It moves very swiftly now." [Thereupon] Hadrat said: "Very well."

Maulānā Raushan Khān Sāhib Murādābādī used to relate: "When my son, Muḥammad Shafī', was a small child, he fell down while running. He suffered a severe injury to his hand. I tried treating it, but he found no relief. I took him to several famous doctors, but no treatment seemed to have any effect. His hand eventually became very thin and paralysed. By the time I eventually wrote to Hadrat, I had lost all hope. He replied: "I am making *du'ā'*, Allāh ﷻ is the Absolute Healer." I had stopped all treatment, but by Allāh's Power, his hand began moving once again. His paralysed hand returned to its original healthy state."

Maulwī Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib Nagīnwī relates: "My fortunate mother, who had accompanied her father and lived in Makkah Mu'azzamah for twelve years, was a very pious, righteous, and ascetic woman. She had memorized countless Ahādīth. She [once]

said to me: 'Son, Hadrat has many students and *murīds*, but no one has really recognized him. During my stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah, I used to see him every day performing the *fajr salāh* in the Haram Sharīf. I also heard people saying: 'This is Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmād Gangohī. He comes from Gangoh.'"

Mīr Wājīd 'Alī Sāhib Qanūjī relates: "My *murshid* (mentor), Hadrat Maulānā Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī], once related to me: 'I went to Gangoh once. There was a new water jug in the *khānqāh*. I took it and used it to draw water from the well. I drank the water and found it to be bitter. At the time of *zuhr salāh*, I met Hadrat and related this to him. He replied: 'The well water is sweet, not bitter.' I then offered the new water jug to him – filled with water. He drank it and tasted that it was bitter – just as I had said. Then he said: 'Very well, leave it aside.' Saying this, he became occupied with the *zuhr salāh*.

After completing the *salāh*, he addressed all the *musallīs* (those who were present for the congregational *salāh*) saying: 'Read as much *kalimah tayyibah* as you can.' Hadrat also started reading. After a short while, Hadrat raised his hands in *du'ā'* and made *du'ā'* with absolute humility and devotion. Then he passed his hands over his face. He then raised the water jug to his mouth, drank the water and tasted that it was sweet. All those who were present in the Musjid tasted it as well and none of them perceived any bitterness or brackishness in it. Hadrat then said: 'This water jug was made from clay which was obtained from a grave upon which Allāh's Punishment had descended. *Al-hamdulillāh*, the punishment has been raised by virtue of the *kalimah*.'"

The police inspector of Gwalior, Maulwī 'Abd as-Sub-hān Sāhib, relates: "There was a revenue collector with whom I was well acquainted. He was retrenched, and although he tried his utmost to get his job back, he did not succeed. He eventually went to Gangoh for *du'ā'*s. Hadrat said to him: "There is a field near your

hometown where a *faqīr majdhūb* lives. You must convey my *salām* to him." The revenue collector felt greatly disturbed by his retrenchment and failure [to be reinstated in his post]. He felt that Hadrat had simply deferred his matter and thus he returned to his hometown and did not even attempt to go to the *faqīr*. Some time later, he happened to be in the vicinity of the field and saw the *faqīr* from a distance. The *faqīr* saw him as well, and called out to him saying: 'Bābā Maulwī Sāhib has sent you. Go and climb the mountain.'

Upon hearing this, he conveyed Hadrat's *salām* to the *faqīr* and returned home – now even more distressed. He thought to himself that Hadrat had deferred his matter and that this *faqīr* had also deferred his matter and that nothing was going to come out of this. When the revenue collector reached his home in this condition of grief and worry, he received the information that he had been reinstated and that he had been appointed [as the revenue collector] in Nānitāl [a mountainous region in India]."

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān's wife broke out in boils and sores. Her condition was very unstable and it was not possible for her to tie or untie any bandages. Several months passed, and various treatments were used, but she received no relief at all. She became extremely weak and could not even get up. When the poor woman lost hope in life, she said to her husband: "Go to Hadrat, convey my *salām* to him, relate my condition to him, and tell him that I am a guest for just a few days in this world."

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān went to Gangoh and conveyed his wife's message to Hadrat. Hadrat expressed his sympathy and said: "She must be really worried. Convey my *salām* to her, and tell her to drink the medicine which I prescribe. Make her drink aniseed and gooseberry water. Tell her that I have asked her to take this medicine. She will be consoled and Allāh ﷻ will cure her." A while later Hadrat said: "The boils will probably burst open very

quickly."

That same night, at 'ishā time, Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān reached his home. He conveyed Hadrat's *salām* and message [to his wife] and immediately gave her the aniseed and gooseberry water. Thereafter they all went to sleep. After about half the night had passed, the sick woman called out to her husband. She told him that her entire bed and clothes were wet, and asked him get up and see the reason for this. Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān got up and said: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, the boils have burst open."

A large amount of pus flowed from the boils, leaving no trace of any abscesses. The following morning the lady arose feeling quite well. There was no more pus [flowing from the wounds], nor was there any sign of sores and boils. Allāh ﷻ Alone knows where they had disappeared to. Everyone had assumed that, even if the boils were to burst open, they would leave behind marks. Yet, by virtue of Hadrat's *du'ā*, the boils left no traces whatsoever. It was as if she had never experienced such an illness.

On one occasion, Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān was quite distressed and said to Hadrat: "Hadrat, a certain person bore enmity towards my father. Now that my father has passed away, he bears undue enmity towards me." Hadrat responded spontaneously: "For how long will he live?" A few days later, the person suddenly passed away.

Munshī Nazar Husayn, the former sheriff of the civil court in Gwalior, relates: "On one occasion I fell critically ill and could not carry out my duties as a sheriff. No doctor could diagnose my illness. If the diagnosis is not correct, how can any treatment help? I thought to myself that this was the end of my life and that I should go and visit Hadrat in Gangoh for the last time. I therefore departed.

When I reached Deoband, I suddenly contracted cholera and lost all

hope of survival. While in that condition, I thought to myself: 'If only I could visit Hadrat before I depart from this world.' I asked around for a conveyance to take me, but nobody was prepared to take me to Gangoh. I became very agitated and said: 'O Allāh! Will I have to take this regret [of not meeting Hadrat] with me into the grave?' The moment I said this, I felt some lightness in my body and perceived a slight improvement in my condition. I got up and felt very happy that I was able to get up. I then tried to stand up and was able to do this as well. I walked a short distance and saw an ox-cart which was heading for Gangoh. The person seated me for a very low fare and I reached Gangoh that same day.

I remained with Hadrat for three days but, because I was so in awe of him, I could not get myself to say anything. When I eventually asked his permission to leave, he displayed extreme affection towards me and this gave me the courage to express my condition to him. I requested his *du'ā'* for my previous illness, and Hadrat immediately raised his hands and made *du'ā'* for me. I bid farewell to him, returned home, and related my story to my family.

I did not take any medication, yet my condition started improving from that day on. I became strong and robust even though I had been very weak and frail since childhood. My body became quite fleshy, and since then I have had no complaint of any weakness or lack of energy."

Munshī 'Abd al-'Alīm Sāhib Bhūngāmī relates: "My maternal aunt suffered from an illness which caused her babies to die within forty days after their birth. This was followed by her own critical illness after giving birth. Her condition had caused her to lose all hope of survival. Several treatments were tried, *ta'wīdh* was resorted to etc., but nothing seemed to work. I made the firm intention that I would take the next child which was born to Gangoh, present it to Hadrat and request his *du'ā'*."

My aunt fell pregnant again, but before she could give birth, we heard the terrifying news of Hadrat's critical illness. Regardless, she went to Gangoh in the same condition. Hadrat was severely ill and constantly unconscious and thus she had no chance to describe her condition to him. She spoke to Hadrat's daughter, sat with her in a *dolā*³⁸, visited Hadrat and returned to her hometown. Subsequently, she gave birth to a healthy boy, and neither the mother nor the child experienced any sign of the illness and discomfort which had previously occurred."

The inspector of police in Gwalior, Maulwī 'Abd as-Sub-hān Sāhib, relates: "Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib, the commissioner of Gwalior, experienced some problems [at work]. The Gwalior municipality demanded Rs 300 000 from him. When his brother heard about this, he went to Hadrat Maulānā Faḍl ar-Raḥmān *rahimahullāh* in Ganj Murādābād. When Hadrat Maulānā asked him the name of his hometown, he replied: 'Deoband.' Astonished, Hadrat Maulānā asked: 'Hadrat Maulānā [Rashīd Aḥmad] is so near to you in Gangoh. Why did you not go to him? Why did you undertake such a lengthy journey [to come to me]?' He replied: 'Hadrat, my affinity with you has brought me here.' The Maulānā said: 'You will have to go to Gangoh. The solution to your problems is dependent on Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib's *du'ā*'. Even if all the *auliyā*' in the world make *du'ā*', it will not be of any benefit'.

He returned and presented himself before Hadrat, where Hadrat Ḥakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib interceded on his behalf. [When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī heard the of the man's difficulties], he said: 'It is not my fault [that he is experiencing difficulty]! Does this person bear any enmity against Madrasah 'Arabīyyah Deoband? The person who bears enmity against it, bears enmity against Allāh ﷻ as

³⁸ A type of carriage for seating women which is carried by porters.

well. He must repent before Allāh ﷻ and then I will make *du'ā'*.' The moment Hadrat made *du'ā'*, the municipality withdrew their demands against the commissioner."

Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib's son, 'Abd al-Wahhāb Khān, was quite impressed by a certain person and decided to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands. This person appeared to be a Sufi, while in actual fact, he was really an irreligious man. Daust Muḥammad Khān did not approve of his son's affinity with this person and prohibited him from pledging *bay'ah* to him. 'Abd al-Wahhāb had seen the Sufi performing certain supernatural feats and was therefore completely enthralled by him. Not only did the son disobey his father, he disliked his father's prohibition.

The *pīr sāhib* felt very proud of having Daust Muḥammad Khān's son as his *murīd*. When the father saw his son's persistence, he – out of love for his son – sat in one corner in solitude, raised his hands in *du'ā'*, went into *murāqabah* (meditation), and turned his attention towards Hadrat.

'Abd al-Wahhāb went to his *pīr* and sat respectfully before him. The *pīr*'s hand had already been extended for the *bay'ah*, when [suddenly] he dropped it and – as if he had no will of his own – he said: "Go and obtain permission from your father. If you do not obtain his permission, the *bay'ah* will not be of any benefit to you."

Hājī [Daust Muḥammad] Sāhib used to say: "At the time when I had directed my attention towards Imām Rabbānī, I saw Hadrat holding 'Abd al-Wahhāb's hand with much affection. Hadrat placed his hand in my hand and said to me: 'Here! He will not become his *murīd* now.'" This occurred at the same time that 'Abd al-Wahhāb had gone to the *pīr* who, consequently, refused to accept his *bay'ah* until he had obtained his father's permission.

[At one time] Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Sāhib's wife experienced

pain in her eyes. Her eyesight was getting weaker by the day and her discomfort gradually increased. She was on the verge of losing her eyesight. When Hadrat was informed of her condition, he went into his room, picked up a few thin branches from one corner and gave it to her husband saying: "Pound these branches into fine powder, mix the powder with *surmah* (antimony) and apply it to her eyes." She did this for a few days. The pain disappeared and her eyesight became strong enough for her to read the Qur'ān.

When Maulānā Mahmūd Husayn Sāhib Barelwī returned from hajj, he was caught up in a severe storm at sea. He related that the mere thought of the crushing waves would cause them to tremble. All the passengers were screaming, shouting and crying. No other voice could be heard. The storm struck in the afternoon. The captain lost all hope and asked the pilgrims to resort to *du'ā'* for there was no doubt [in his mind] that the ship would be destroyed.

The Maulānā writes: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, by virtue of remaining in the company of my elders, I experienced a special condition of tranquillity during the course of this terrifying situation. I was neither frightened nor anxious. However, there was another passenger from Java [with us] to whom I owed some money. I was concerned about repaying him, and hoped that I could fulfil this obligation towards him – if only I could obtain some money from somewhere, or at least ask him to pardon me. Apart from this concern, I experienced no fear whatsoever.

I certainly made *du'ā'* through the *tawassul* (means) of our elders, and I begged Allāh ﷻ to have Mercy on us and to save us from this storm. When evening approached, there was still no decrease in the storm's intensity. The waves were just as tumultuous as before – rocking the ship from side to side. Night fell, but who could have slept under such conditions? Who could have gotten any rest? All the passengers were seated like statues. The entire night passed in this way. During the latter part of the night, I was overcome by

slumber. [Actually], I ought to describe it as a condition between wakefulness and a state of dreaming. [It was then that] I saw Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib standing in the ocean, giving support to a ship which was at the centre of a storm.

I got up immediately and felt convinced that we would be saved by Allāh's Will. Within a few moments the storm subsided and the ship returned to its normal pace. Then the captain said: 'I lost control of the ship, and it has moved 250 [nautical] miles away from its original course. You people are fortunate that we did not strike a rock mass because it would have reduced us [the ship] to smithereens.'"

A few students in Deoband were apprehended and put on trial. This was actually a consequence of the opposition of some [of their] enemies. These innocent souls were tried and found guilty in the Sahāranpūr Court and sentenced to imprisonment.

Hadrat was busy performing *wudū'* when a person arrived from Sahāranpūr. Someone asked him about the case and he replied: "They have been imprisoned." Astonished, Hadrat exclaimed: "Really?" The person replied: "Hadrat, it was inevitable. These poor innocent souls have been imprisoned." Hadrat said: "Don't worry, they will be released." Look at Allāh's Power! An appeal was lodged and their innocence was established in front of the judge of the High Court, and he released them immediately.

On one occasion, Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān Sāhib fell ill. In the mornings and evenings his hands, legs and face would swell, but as soon as the sun appeared, the swelling would subside. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī went to Rāmpūr, and Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān Sāhib left Ābhah in order to meet him there. After performing the '*asr ṣalāh*', Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Khān Sāhib decided to return home because of his illness. [Before he left] Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn Sāhib advised him: "You should at least obtain permission

from your *pīr*." However, Hadrat did not permit him to return and therefore he had to stay over [in Rāmpūr].

Both elders were together at *maghrib* time, so [he used the opportunity, and] he mentioned his illness to them. Hadrat then told Hakīm Sāhib: "You must ask them to also cook *moongh dhall* today." That evening, when they sat down to have supper, *moongh dhall* was also served. Some meat had also been prepared.

Hadrat moved the bowl of meat away from him [Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Sāhib] and moved the bowl of *moongh dhall* towards him. [Thereupon] Hakīm Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, why did you move the meat away from him?" Hadrat replied: "He has a certain illness, and meat will be harmful to him." Hakīm Sāhib said: "He has a weak liver. The *dhall* will be harmful to him." Saying this, Hakīm Sāhib moved the *dhall* away from him and placed the bowl of meat in front of him.

[Confused] Maulwī Nazār Muḥammad Sāhib withdrew his hand and said: "I will certainly not eat the meat without Hadrat's permission." Then Hadrat said: "Very well, you may eat the gravy with the *dhall*, but don't eat the meat itself."

Thereafter they all had their meal, performed *'ishā salāh* and went to bed. When the Maulwī Sāhib woke up the next morning, the swelling was even worse than the previous days. He became very worried and mentioned it to Hakīm Sāhib. He said: "You ate the *moongh dhall* and that is what caused this." When Hadrat completed his *ishraq salāh*, Maulwī Sāhib went to him and described his condition. Hadrat said: "You ate meat, and that is what caused this."

When he was about to depart for Ābhah, he went to shake hands with Hakīm Sāhib to bid him farewell. Hakīm Sāhib said to him: "Bhāi, you must make *du'ā* for yourself, you have a serious

illness." Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān replied: "Ḥadrat, a sick person always makes *du'ā'* for himself. You must make *du'ā'* for me." Ḥakīm Sāhib replied: "I made the *du'ā'*, but you must seek treatment."

[The poor] Maulwī Sāhib became terrified when he heard this. Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī was seated at a distance and overheard this conversation. He summoned the Maulwī Sāhib, displayed absolute love towards him and consoled him, saying: "You may go, do not worry about what Ḥakīmī said. Everything will be okay." By Allāh's Grace, all his swelling disappeared. He never had to resort to any medication, nor did he need anyone's *du'ā'*. His swelling stopped the very next day and never appeared again.

Maulwī Badr ad-Dīn Sāhib Gilāuthwī used to relate that four guests came to Ḥadrat one day. Coincidentally, there was no food in Ḥadrat's house [on that day]. Ḥadrat went to his house and said to his wife: "We have four guests." She replied: "Allāh is the Master." He asked: "What, is there nothing?" She replied: "We have Allāh's Name and nothing else." He said: "Go and check properly." After searching, she found about a quarter kilogram of rice. Then Ḥadrat said: "Allāh is the Master. Cook the rice and it will be good if you could add some ghee and sugar."

The rice was cooked and emptied into a small dish. Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī personally brought it outside and placed it in front of the guests. The guests thought that the [actual] food would be brought in china dishes and that the bowl of rice was brought in first because it was too much to carry [along] with the other food. Thus they waited for the other food to arrive. When Ḥadrat saw this, he said: "This is the only food [we have available]. You may commence eating." Normally, when sweet foods are eaten, a person eats only a little and is unable to eat more, but this food which was offered to them was extremely delicious and they ate to their fill. The guests used to say that they had never eaten such a delicious

sweet meal in their lives. It did not make them feel nauseous, nor did they feel as if they have over-eaten, yet it satiated their hunger. When they had finished eating, the bowl was still half filled. Hadrat then took it back into his house. It seemed as though the bowl had a hole in the bottom from which food was constantly flowing in.

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib relates: "During my hajj journey, a Hakīm Sāhib from Ambhālah was my travelling companion and he was a *murīd* of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. Because of this connection, he knew Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and had intense confidence in him. He said to me: 'I firmly believe that every word he utters is in accordance with Divine Will.' He then related this story to me: 'Before this hajj journey, I went to Gangoh and Hadrat asked me: 'Did you ever perform hajj?' I replied: 'No. I would like to go, but I do not have enough money.' Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: 'Go and perform the hajj. Do not worry about the money, Allāh ﷻ will provide the means. Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib rahimahullāh also went for hajj without any money but, when he reached Calcutta, people were throwing bags of money into his conveyance.'"

The Hakīm Sāhib continues: "I returned home. I had about one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five rupees to my name. I took whatever money I had and proceeded directly to the station without informing anyone. While proceeding towards the station, a person saw me and realized that I was going for hajj. He arrived at the station with a hundred rupees, and secretly gave the money to me. I was convinced that this was Hadrat's karāmat and the blessing of what he had said. I took the money and boarded the train."

Hājī Hāfiz Fasīh ad-Dīn Sāhib, a trader from Meerut, relates: "I pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat and he accepted me as his *murīd*. Then I said to him: 'Hadrat, hajj has become *fard* upon me. I really want to go, but I have a natural fear of water. The ocean is so large and I lose courage if I merely think of the motion of the waves. Make *du'ā*' that Allāh ﷻ gives me the courage.' Hadrat remained silent.

Hāfiz Sāhib continues: 'I bid farewell to Hadrat and returned to my hometown. Before I even arrived at the Meerut station, I felt all my fear of water disappearing from my heart. I tested my heart several times, but perceived no fear whatsoever for water. Consequently, I was blessed with the opportunity of visiting the Haramayn Sharīfayn. All praise is due solely to Allāh ﷻ, I was able to undertake the sea journey in absolute peace and comfort.'

Maulwī Hayāt 'Alī Sāhib relates: "For a long time I considered items which were bought from the shops and marketplaces to be doubtful. Thus I used to abstain totally from eating anything [which was bought]. When I arrived in Gangoh, the first thing which Hadrat presented to me were some sweetmeats [which had been bought] from the shops. I ate the sweetmeats thinking them to be Hadrat's tabarruk (an item of blessing) and a gift from him. *Al-hamdulillāh*, I did not suffer any harm nor did I have any of the doubts which previously caused me to abstain from items which had been bought from the shops."

Hakīm 'Abd al-'Azīz Gilāuthwī brought his brother, 'Abd al-Qayyūm, to Gangoh. He hired the carriage for the return journey as well. He decided to return the following day and went to Hadrat to inform him. Before he could say anything, Hadrat said: "If you intend leaving, you may proceed." He replied: "Very well." Hadrat continued: "Carry some food with you." The Hakīm Sāhib replied: "Hadrat, if we feel the need to eat anything, we will stop in Ambheta." Hadrat insisted: "Allāh ﷻ Alone knows what could happen on the road. Carry some food with you." We had only travelled about two miles out of Gangoh when the wheel of the carriage broke. We tried to repair it but failed. We were forced to spend the night in the open field. The food which we had carried with us really came in handy.

Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib Bhūgāmī rahimahullāh was one of Hadrat's devoted *khādims*. Since childhood he had had an

allergy for beef and, for that reason, he would always abstain from eating it. Whenever he consumed it by mistake, it would affect him immediately and he would remain ill for months on end.

On one occasion, he went to Gangoh and sat down to share a meal with Hadrat's son, Mahmūd Ahmad Marhūm. Several kinds of dishes were offered to them, amongst which was a bowl of beef. Hājī Sāhib did not dish out any of the beef, and continued eating the other food which was available. [When he saw this], Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad Sāhib asked: "Hājī Sāhib, why are you not eating the beef?" Hājī Sāhib explained: "It never agrees with me." Maulwī Mahmūd Ahmad Sāhib then held Hājī Sāhib's hand, placed it in the bowl and said: "Say *bismillāh* and eat it. This beef has been cooked here by *faqīrs*. *Inshā Allāh*, it will not harm you."

Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān Sāhib obeyed his order and ate the beef to his fill, thinking to himself that whatever is bound to happen, will happen. This beef of the *faqīrs* was really not meant to harm anyone. It was digested very well and, since then, he was always able to eat beef. In fact, he would eat it with relish.

Hājī Sāhib's wife fell seriously ill. She was suffering from excruciating pain in her stomach and this would cause her to tremble and writhe [in pain]. At times it would cause her to fall unconscious and she would gasp for breath. These bouts of pain continued for about two months. One such bout was extremely severe. Her teeth started chattering, the pulse in her hands and feet stopped, she fell unconscious, and her entire body became cold.

Hājī Sāhib loved his wife dearly and was extremely disturbed [by her suffering]. He observed her closely and could only feel her chest moving. He lost hope in her survival, sat down next to her, and started reading *Sūrah Yā Sīn*. A few moments later, the sick woman suddenly opened her eyes. She took a long breath and closed her eyes again. All those who were present thought that

these were her final moments.

Hājī Daust Muḥammad Khān could not bear looking at this sorrowful scene. He got up from where he was seated on the bed, went into *murāqabah* (meditation) and directed his attention towards Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, saying: "If her time is up, then let her depart with *īmān*. If she has to live, then let this pain which she has been suffering from for the last three days disappear." He had hardly completed his *murāqabah* when his wife opened her eyes and started talking. Her pulse returned to normal and she regained full consciousness.

Within a few days she regained her strength and recovered completely. She never suffered any pain again. Hājī Sāhib used to relate: "When I went into *murāqabah*, I saw Hadrat before me. This was followed by a condition in which I saw Hadrat in whichever direction I turned. This condition remained for three days and nights, and only disappeared when my wife had recovered completely."

Maulwī Muḥammad Yāsīn Sāhib Deobandī relates: "I went to Gangoh with Maulānā 'Abd al-Mu'min Sāhib and Hāfiz Liyāqat 'Alī Sāhib. It was in the afternoon when we decided to take leave from Hadrat. We reckoned that Rāmpūr was only about twenty miles away and that we should be able to reach there by 'asr time. We thought that we could spend the night at Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn's house and then we would leave for Deoband early the next morning. Hadrat said: 'Why are you leaving now, where will you spend the night?' I replied: 'Hadrat, we intend spending the night in Rāmpūr.' He said: 'You will suffer undue discomfort on the road at night. What use is that? You may leave here in the morning.' We were all quite surprised because it was summer season. [In summer] the days are long, and twenty miles is not such a long distance. We would certainly [be able to] reach there within five hours – if not four – and it was still seven hours before nightfall. I said to Hadrat:

'I have to be at *madrasah* tomorrow morning.' Hadrat replied: 'I am also very aware of *madrasah* responsibilities, but I am [only] saying this for your sake. You will wander about at night and will have to bear much hardship.' Although Hadrat advised us repeatedly, we did not pay any heed. We were bent on leaving. When we shook hands with Hadrat he said to us: 'Very well, *bhāi*, you may go. I leave you in Allāh's Protection.'

We departed and, as soon as we left the inhabited area of the town, Hāfiz *Liyāqat* 'Alī realized our folly and said: 'May Allāh protect us. We do not know what calamity may befall us. We did not listen to Hadrat's advice and did not give any thought to what we ought to have done. Hadrat's advice was not without purpose. I have experienced this previously [in my life].' He then related his story: 'On one occasion, I was departing from Hadrat's company when he said to me: 'Do not go now, you will get wet in the rain. It is going to rain.' The sky was absolutely clear and the sun was in full view, so I did not have the slightest expectation of rain. I said: 'Hadrat, there is no sign whatsoever of any clouds in the sky.' He said: 'You will get wet in the rain and you will find yourself in difficulty.' I repeated the same thing again: 'Hadrat, there is no sign of rain in the sky and I have to reach home today because of my job.' Because of my persistence, Hadrat gave me permission to leave and I departed from Gangoh.

I must have walked only about four or six miles when clouds suddenly started appearing and darkness encompassed me from all directions. It started raining so heavily that it became difficult for me to lift my foot and proceed forward. I was completely drenched from head to toe. With much difficulty I reached *Nānauta* and was forced to spend the night there. I reached *Deoband* the following day – after having gone through great difficulty. We will have to see what is destined for us today.'

With these thoughts, we proceeded. [A while later], we noticed a

footpath. We thought that this footpath was a short-cut, so we followed it. We thought that we would be able to cut about four miles from our journey. We continued walking until the evening, but there was no sign of Rāmpūr. Then we came across a small village at about *maghrib* time. Upon reaching there, we inquired about the road to Rāmpūr and were informed that we were now thirty miles from Gangoh and fourteen miles from Rāmpūr. We were terrified, but we performed our *maghrib ṣalāh* there and proceeded.

It was a dark moonless night and we could not even see our hands in front of our faces. We could not manage to stay on the foot path and started wandering aimlessly amongst the plantations. It had been raining for two days, and on several occasions we were immersed in water up to our knees. In some places it was very difficult for us to maintain our balance and we had to cling to each others hands for support. There was no sign of any human whom we could ask for directions.

[After some time] we vaguely discerned a forest in front of us, but the dense foliage and trees did not permit us to enter. We raised our eyes and saw that the forest extended for miles on end, and we could not see any path in the opposite direction. We were at a loss and very concerned about how we should proceed and what we should do. We were fatigued, and forced to remain standing there.

In this state of helplessness, we made *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to send us a guide who would remove us from our calamity. A few minutes later we noticed a person approaching from a nearby plantation. He shouted from a distance: 'Who is standing there?' We replied: 'Bhāi, we are travellers.' He said: 'Do not worry, I am here. Had I not been here you would not have found your way. Come, follow me.' Saying this, he advanced into the forest. We followed him and, within a matter of a few feet, we came upon a path. We proceeded along this path. There was no sign of any water or mud. The

stranger then said: 'A burglary took place last night at the house of the person who lives in the place where you are heading at, and a lot of goods were stolen.'

We did not know who this guide was or how it came about that he knew where we were going to. In a matter of about fifteen minutes he lead us close to the inhabited area of Rāmpūr. He pointed in the direction of the town and said: 'Do you see those lights? That is Rāmpūr. You may go now.' We asked him: 'And where are you going to?' He replied: 'I am also going to Rāmpūr. I am going to relieve myself [first].' Thereupon he went to a nearby tree, and sat down with the excuse of relieving himself.

It was then that it dawned upon us that Khadīr ؑ was the one who normally guided people in situations such as ours. This had to be him, and we ought to meet him. We therefore ran towards the tree but there was no sign of him whatsoever. We eventually reached Rāmpūr and spent the night there."

There are countless examples of such incidents in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's life which his associates — near and distant ones — experienced from time to time. A few of these incidents have been presented to the reader to serve as examples. In the beginning, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib was extremely weak-natured and would feel quite intimidated if he had to speak in an assembly of even a few people. There was a time when he was a teacher in Bhāwalpūr and a debate against his opponents [*ahl-e-bid'ah*] was arranged. He was appointed as the speaker on his side.

When he went to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, he expressed his weak nature to him and said: "A Hadīth states that Jarīr ibn 'Abdillāh Bajalī ؓ could not ride a horse. By virtue of Rasūlullāh's ؑ *du'ā*', his fear of horses disappeared and he became a proficient rider. We learn from this that the powers of the *Ahlullāh* also extend to natural things. Hadrat, I implore you to make *du'ā*' for me. I am

worried about how my weak nature is going to permit me to speak in front of thousands of people in an assembly which will be attended by the masses as well as the learned." Thereupon Hadrat said: "Allāh ﷻ has the Power to do anything."

The boldness and courage which Hadrat Maulānā developed thereafter is clearly displayed in the title which he then earned amongst the '*ulamā*' of India. He is known as *ra'īs al-mutakallimīn* (the leader and chief amongst the orators). Whenever there is a need to speak in front of large assemblies, or to debate and discuss with the opposition in the presence of thousands of people, it is Hadrat Maulānā alone who is selected and sent forward.

This is the direct result of the influence which Allāh ﷻ bestows upon His close servants, and the effect of the acceptance and close proximity through which unusual and supernatural feats – known as *karāmāt* – are performed. It is beyond my ability to encompass and list Imām Rabbānī's *karāmāt*. [This is] mostly because my knowledge is limited in this regard. If we were to examine the incidents which are related to *kashf* (exposition), which the masses consider to be the basis of *wilāyat* and *ma'rifat* (recognition of Allāh ﷻ) we will find thousands of examples. This was experienced by his associates in general. However, they pale in significance when compared to the true excellence of following the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ. This is the reason why no one thought of gathering [examples of] these incidents, recording them, and preserving them.

From amongst Hadrat's thousands of associates, there is probably not a single person who did not experience an incident of *kashf* or *karāmat* [at some point]. How, then, can anyone seal off this copious ocean? I shall merely quote a few incidents with the aim of completing this topic.

One of Hadrat's students, Maulānā 'Alī Radā Sāhib, relates: "During my student days I suffered from an illness which prevented

me from maintaining my *wuḍū*'. There were times when I had to perform *wuḍū* several times in order to complete one *ṣalāh*. On one occasion I happened to enter the Musjid early for the *fajr ṣalāh*. It was the winter season and it was particularly cold on that morning. I was very troubled at having to perform *wuḍū*' repeatedly. An evil thought entered my mind, and I mused: 'What is this strict adherence to the *Ḥanafī madh-hab*? Here is *Hadrat* waiting for it to get brighter,³⁹ while I am dying, performing *wuḍū*' repeatedly.'

A few moments later, *Hadrat* entered and the congregation commenced. After the *ṣalāh*, I – together with a few others – walked behind *Hadrat* and accompanied him to his room. When all the people departed and *Hadrat* was about to close the door, he called me to him and said: 'Bhāi, the people here delay in coming for the *fajr ṣalāh*. That is why I delay in performing the *ṣalāh*.' Saying this, *Hadrat* went into his room, and I was left drenched in perspiration due to regret."

Munshī Nathār 'Alī and Gauhar Khān – both employees at Platen No. 65 – took leave [from work] and made preparations to travel from Lucknow to Gangoh in order to pledge *bay'ah*. Their transport was already waiting for them at their door when they received a telegram informing them of the impending arrival of the governor. Acting upon the instruction of their officer, they were forced to cancel their trip.

Ten days later, after having completed their duties, they departed for Gangoh and reached safely. [Upon their arrival] *Hadrat* clearly said to them: "Both of you had intended leaving on such and such a date, but you were prevented from doing so." When the food was laid out on the table mat (*dastarkhvān*), he said: "You have your

³⁹ According to the *Ḥanafī madh-hab*, it is preferable to perform *fajr ṣalāh* when it is bright – the latter part of *fajr* time.

two ponies with you as well. They are also my guests. We have to feed them grass and grain first." No one had informed Hadrat that these two people had arrived on ponies.

Munshī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib, the deputy treasurer of Bijnuar, went to visit Hadrat and wanted to speak to him in privacy. He was waiting for an opportunity, but the constant coming and going of the *khādims* prevented him. Eventually he walked towards Hadrat's room and asked Maulwī Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib to accompany him inside so that he could speak to Hadrat in private. A few moments later a person arrived at the room entrance and said: "Hadrat was just talking about you. He was saying: 'Muḥammad Hasan has not [yet] come to speak to me since he arrived.'" Munshī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib entered the room and saw that Hadrat was all alone. As soon as he concluded his intended discussion with Hadrat, people started entering and leaving the room as before.

Hadrat Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn's father, Shāh Sirāj al-Yaqīn, was a *mujāz* [*khalīfah*] of his father. His father used to believe in the prevalent customs of *fātiḥah* and so forth. Father and son had a [major] dispute regarding these issues. Maulānā Sirāj al-Yaqīn Sāhib considered 'urs without musical instruments to be a source of blessings, and conducted such gatherings on a regular basis, while Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib would refute such customs. Ill-feelings developed between father and son due to these disagreements. The Maulānā [the son] became annoyed and left [his hometown] for Gangoh. Although he had left his father and gone to Gangoh, he was constantly preoccupied with [causing] his father's displeasure. One day he was sitting with Hadrat, when Hadrat suddenly said: "I was thinking about your father. His love for you is reverberating in his heart. His displeasure is just superficial. You can expect a letter from him tomorrow or the day after, in which he will ask you to return." The following day, a letter from his father arrived in which he expressed his grief over their separation, asked his son to return immediately, and agreed to practise as he advised.

Once, a *khādim* went to Hadrat and shook hands with him. Hadrat was in his room at the time and, the moment the *khādim* sat down, Hadrat said to him: "Go and fetch all your goods and place it in the front room." Another *khādim* said: "I have already transferred his goods." Hadrat said: "No! It is only the owner who can check his own goods." The person got up immediately and went to check his goods. He discovered that his water jug was missing. The conveyance which had brought him [to the *khānqāh*] was supposed to have left immediately, but he was very fortunate because it had stopped over at another place and had not left as yet. After much difficulty, he managed to get his water jug back the following day.

Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib relates: "Hadrat usually stopped his Qur'ān recitation and opened his room door a short while before 'asr. I would always arrive there at that time. Because I thought that Hadrat was probably relaxing after the Qur'ān recitation, I would arrive silently, without making a single sound, and sit outside in the *seh dārī*. After a while, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would either call for me by name, or [he would] say: 'Who is there? Come in.' He would then give me an audience."

On one occasion, Sufi Karam Husayn Sāhib fell ill and recovered within a few days. [During that time], he received a letter from his family in which he was asked to return home, and thus he made preparations to leave. When he went to Hadrat to ask permission to leave, Hadrat said to him: "Karam Husayn, do not leave tomorrow. You may leave in two or three days' time." This was contrary to the norm. Although he found it difficult to cancel his plans, he [obeyed and] remained behind. The following day he suddenly developed a severe fever. He was trembling so profusely that he could not wake up for the *'ishā ṣalāh*. At that point he imagined what would have happened to him if he had continued on his journey.

Munshī Akhtar Jamīl Sāhib ran into some problems with the police and was involved in a serious court case. When he lost all hope and

his worry increased, he wrote a letter to Hadrat describing his situation. Hadrat replied: "There is no need for you to worry in the least. No one can do anything to you." By virtue of Hadrat's *du'ā'*, he was not harmed in the least. Subsequently, he became embroiled in another case against him in the Financial Court. He wrote to Hadrat and received the following reply: "What is bound to happen cannot be averted. I am also making *du'ā'*. May Allāh accept my *du'ā'*, but what is bound to happen cannot be averted." Consequently, he lost the case and did not receive the verdict he would have liked.

Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib had taken his wife to her maternal aunt's place in Gangoh. He dropped her off at her aunt's home, and went to meet Hadrat. The thought suddenly crossed his mind that he should also let his wife pledge *bay'ah* to Hadrat. When he mentioned this to Hadrat, he replied: "Very well. Go and fetch her." He then realised that it was not a good idea to bring her there so suddenly. She had not even settled yet, and that it would be better to bring her the following day – after she had taken a bath. However, Hadrat repeated: "Go and fetch her." The husband replied: "Hadrat, I will bring her tomorrow." Thereupon Hadrat said: "Very well. If it is your wish, you may bring her tomorrow, but it would be better if you brought her today." When the poor woman took a bath the following day and prepared herself to go to Hadrat, a violent dust storm engulfed them. It prevented her from leaving, and she only had the honour of pledging *bay'ah* the following day.

Munshī Qādir Bakhsh Sāhib Bulandshahrī writes: "The ex-governor of Kabul, Ya'qūb Khān, used to always keep Maulānā Khalīl ar-Rahmān Sāhib at his side because of the latter's piety. Maulānā Khalīl ar-Rahmān used to relate to us: 'At the time when I was studying Hadīth under Hadrat, there was a student by the name of Walī Muḥammad. He was a very poor, but virtuous man. He would suffice with the little money which was sent to him from

home. No matter what needs he may have had, he would never mention these to his friends or his class mates. On one occasion, there was a delay in his money arriving from home and he had to stay without food once or twice. However, he did not mention this to anyone, nor did he allow anyone to come to know of it.

During the morning, he proceeded to Hadrat in this condition with his book under his arm. On the way he passed the sweetmeat shop where hot *halwā* (a sweet dish) was being prepared. He stood there for some time thinking to himself that, if he had the money, he would have bought some. However, he did not have any money, and thus he continued and reached the *khānqāh*.

It seemed as though Hadrat had been waiting for him. The moment Hadrat replied to his *salām*, he said: "Maulwī Walī Muḥammad, today I really feel like eating *halwā*. Here, take these four *ānās*, buy *halwā* from whichever shop you like and bring it to me." Maulwī Walī Muḥammad bought *halwā* from the same shop and placed it before Hadrat. Then Hadrat said: "Miyā Walī Muḥammad, it is my earnest desire that you should eat this *halwā*." After this incident, Maulwī Walī Muḥammad used to say: "I used to be scared to appear before Hadrat after this because the whisperings of the heart are not within our control and Hadrat would always come to know of them."

Hāfiz 'Abd al-Hāfiz Sāhib Meerutī, a trader from Bombay, relates: "I wanted to take my wife to Bombay. When I went to Gangoh, I mentioned this to Hadrat and sought his advice. Hadrat responded spontaneously: "What! Do you want to take her there to kill her?" The poor person did not understand what Hadrat meant, so he repeated: "Hadrat, I am quite troubled when I am there [alone]." Hadrat said: "Very well, take her, but you must bring her back by *īd*."

He left Gangoh, collected his wife, and proceeded to Bombay. He

remembered Hadrat's instruction and took her back to Meerut before īd. [Upon her return], she suddenly fell ill and within a few days she passed away. He realized that, had he delayed in bringing her back, this calamity would have struck him in Bombay [far away from his family].

On one occasion, two outsiders came to meet Hadrat. After making *salām* and shaking hands, they expressed their intention of pledging *bay'ah*. He said: "Perform two *rak'ats*." They remained seated with their heads lowered for a short while and then walked out quietly. Once they were outside, Hadrat said: "They were both *Shī'ahs*. They had come to test me." Some of those who were present followed the two to investigate the matter and learnt that they were really *Shī'ahs*.

Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib openly spoke out about certain *masā'il* which people were opposed to. They became his enemies and their opposition reached such a level that derogatory remarks were made against him. They spared no efforts in slandering him. Several false accusations were levelled against him and they even succeeded in getting a court order issued against him. He was quite troubled [about this] and wrote to Hadrat regarding this situation. Hadrat replied: "Do not worry. I am making *du'ā'*. Place your trust in Allāh ﷻ. If the enemy is strong – Allāh is much stronger."

Although Hadrat's words gave him some consolation, he started becoming negative and pessimistic about everything. He imagined himself appearing in court on criminal charges – not knowing which questions will be posed to him, or which answers he should give, and so forth. While thinking about all these problems, he fell asleep. He had a dream in which Hadrat was holding him by his hand and taking him with him. His eyes opened and all his worry and trepidation disappeared from his heart. His case was thrown out of court the following day. He did not even have to present himself in court.

During the time when Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiyānī was writing *Barāhīn*, there was much discussion in the newspapers about his merits and excellences. Until that time, he still had an affinity with Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. Whenever anyone from that region [Gangoh] would visit him, he would inquire about Hadrat and ask: "Is Hadrat Maulānā well? How far is Gangoh from Delhi? How are the roads?" In short, he even considered visiting Hadrat.

During those days, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī once said the following words regarding him: "This person is doing good work but he needs a Shaykh. If not, there is the possibility that he will go astray." [Not long] After this, he started making claims that he was a *mujaddid* (reviver), the Mahdī and 'Isā ﷺ.

Hāfiz Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib was one of Hadrat's relatives. He used to say: "The *seh darī* had not been constructed during our student days. Water jugs, filled with water, used to be kept in Hadrat's room. Hadrat would only perform his optional ṣalāh in his room.

It was watermelon season and some students had brought sugar-candy which we normally used to eat with watermelons. We concealed these sugar-candy amongst the water jugs [in Hadrat's room]. When we came out after ṣalāh, some of my class mates asked me to silently sneak into the room and fetch the sugar-candy. I entered his room very silently and saw that Hadrat was busy removing one sleeve. He said: "Go! Take them out quickly and go. You will get delayed for ṣalāh."

Maulānā Hakīm Aḥmad Sa'īd Amrauhī, the *afsar al-atibbā'* (Surgeon General), relates: "From an early age I had a yearning to visit the pious elders of Dīn. I undertook lengthy journeys for this purpose and met many famous elders, but Allāh ﷻ Alone knows why I was never sufficiently convinced to pledge *bay'ah* to any one of them. I went to Gangoh with this same objective and upon seeing

his total emulation of the Sunnah, my affinity for him increased. However, I still felt that I should not pledge *bay'ah* until my heart draws me towards him. I stayed over for several days and, upon witnessing his excellent *ma'mulāt* (practices) and commendable character, I decided to pledge *bay'ah*.

I conveyed my request through a few *khādims*, but Hadrat flatly refused, saying: "No Bhāi, forgive me, but I consider it very dangerous to accept *bay'ah* from senior people. Some people may ask me to intercede before you on their behalf, others might level accusations against me, and so on. In short – it would not be appropriate." I was very disappointed when I heard Hadrat's reply. The fact that I did not possess the worthiness to be afforded the opportunity of pledging *bay'ah* at the hands of the 'guide of the era' saddened me.

Several days passed in disappointment and remorse. One day Hadrat was sitting alone in his room. I considered this to be a golden opportunity, plucked up the courage, and stepped into his room. I said to him: "Hadrat, I did not expect to be deprived. Although I am worthless, Hadrat is the one who is worthy." Hadrat looked towards me and said: "I see you have hastened. You should at least convince your heart first." I truly regretted my baseless whisperings and evil thoughts and apologized. He said: "No, no. A person has to convince his heart completely before he can pledge *bay'ah*."

*Many times Iblīs the Shaytān
appears unto us in human form.*

*Therefore, do not take bay'ah
to just any person [wearing a pious garb].*

*To simply place your hands in the hands of such a person
is not always beneficial,*

*as sometimes the opposite is the result ...
and that is spiritual harm!*

[Hadrat continued:] "You may go and start your work. May Allāh ~~the~~ bestow His blessings upon you." Thereafter my heart started to develop tranquillity, my uneasiness disappeared, and the bond which a *murīd* has to have with his Shaykh was established in my heart.

When I returned to Hyderabad from my hometown, I acquired many material blessings and I also received the title of *afṣar al-atibbā'* (Surgeon General) from the president. As a result of my repeated successes in relation to many senior doctors, my honour and respect increased by the day."

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib once presented himself while Hadrat was dictating a *fatwā* to Maulwī Siddīq Aḥmad Sāhib. The thought entered his [Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn's] mind: "I wish this responsibility [of writing the *fatwā*] could be given to me." Hadrat immediately related this incident: "I once presented myself to Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] in Thānabhawan. Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib wanted me to write down a few responses to some court cases. I said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: 'Permit me to go home. I have not come here to write responses [to court cases].'"

Similarly, the the thought once crossed Maulwī Sāhib's mind that, in some of his *maktūbāt* (writings), Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib regarded loud *dhikr* to be a *bid'ah*. Later on, when the Maulwī Sāhib went to visit Hadrat, Hadrat addressed him directly and said: "Permission for loud *dhikr* is sometimes given by the Naqshbandīyyah elders as well."

Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib Gangohī was always eager to meet *faqīrs*. Whenever he heard of a *buzurg* going to a specific place, he would go there to meet him. Once he heard of a certain

faqīr and went to visit him. However, he quickly realized that he [the *faqīr*] was greedy and materialistic, and therefore he left immediately. On another occasion a Maulwī Sāhib arrived and the people were speaking very highly of him. Therefore, [as per his habit], he went to visit him as well. However, he discovered that the Maulwī Sāhib was a *bid'atī*.

Eventually Maulwī Ismā'īl left Gwalior and went to Gangoh where he presented himself before Hadrat. Hadrat started speaking about *bid'atī faqīrs* and *maulwīs* and addressed him directly, saying: "Maulwī Ismā'īl, I am telling you specifically, do not go to meet *bid'atī faqīrs* and *maulwīs*." Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib repented and resolved never to go to anyone unless he was fully convinced of their authenticity.

Once, Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib was in Hadrat's presence when he thought about his students' lack of interest in writing letters to him. While talking about other matters, Hadrat said: "I have three hundred students, but only three or four write letters to me." There were numerous incidents of this nature, and even Hadrat's associates considered them to be quite normal and ordinary. No one thought of remembering them or preserving them.

*The commentary of my Beloved is so limitless
that out of His thousands of Perfections,
this is like a single word which I was able to pen down.
In reality, thousands of His Perfections remain hidden.*

From amongst Hadrat's thousands and thousands of *murīds* and associates, there is probably not a single living soul who did not experience one or more of these incidents. A few examples were presented to the reader. The fact of the matter is that, in the light of his spiritual influence and internal attention, these incidents of *kashf* hold no weight whereby we could find enjoyment in quoting and explaining them.

In the field of instruction and guidance, Allāh ﷻ had bestowed a very lofty level of deep understanding, acumen and proficiency upon Hadrat which both the tongue and pen enjoy expounding upon. His indisputable ability to accurately diagnose and treat his *murīds* in the fields of education, instruction and supervision, as well as the crown of prophetic deputyship which he was made to wear, are sufficient to display the glowing lantern of his internal splendour and conviction.

I consider it appropriate to collate some of his *irshādāt* (statements and directives) which will be a means of guidance and a continuous charity for as long as Allāh ﷻ Wills.

Every word which emanated from his mouth created a yearning for the Hereafter and served as guidance towards it. However, the benefits of some words are obvious and clear, while others are subtle and intricate. Some of his statements are replies to questions, while others are his own discussions and explanations. I felt it appropriate to categorise these in three separate chapters, namely *Irshādāt* (statements), stories of the pious, and *malfūzāt* (sayings). By separating them in this way, the subtle difference between them should become obvious – although the purpose and result of all three are the same.

والله الموفق وعليه التكلان

*"Allāh is the One who gives inspiration,
and we place our trust in Him."*

IRSHĀDĀT – STATEMENTS

The following is a conversation between two lovers, but refers to a conversation between the lover of Allāh, and Allāh:

*I said: "When will I succeed
in acquiring your sweet lips and tongue?"
She said: "As you command, so will I do!"*

*I said: "Your sweet lips and mouth
demands great payment (effort)."
She said: "In such a transaction
you will surely suffer no loss
(it will be profitable for you)."*

*I said: "Of what benefit
are these sweet lips to an old man?"
She said: "By my sweet words (and touch)
the old are returned to youth again."*

*I said: "To acquire You as my treasure and good fortune
is the du'ā' of Hāfiz (name of the poet)."
She said: "This is the du'ā' (supplication)
of the angels of the seven heavens."*

1. Some people are *abū al-waqt* and others are *ibn al-waqt*. An *abū al-waqt* is one whose condition is subservient to him. He can embrace or repel an overpowering condition whenever he likes. An *ibn al-waqt* is in a state of compulsion in both situations – he neither has the courage to embrace it, nor does he have the strength to repel it.

2. According to *ahl-e-basīrat* (people of insight, the *Ahlullāh*), a person will be a *Sāhib-e-hāl* when the effect of *dhikr* comes into his heart. However, there is no stipulated time frame for the effects

thereof to become visible on his physical body. This is what people, who only look at the external, would consider to be hāl. (1) Some people experience it at the beginning and then it disappears. (2) Some people experience it in the middle and then it is removed (3) Some experience it at the end and it remains with them. (4) Some experience it in the middle, but it does not disappear. (5) Some people experience it from beginning to the end. Hadrat then mentioned Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs as an example. (6) Some people do not experience it at all. The two [either experiencing the effects of *dhikr*, or not experiencing any effects] are not essential for the attainment of the objective. Allāh ﷻ can convey anyone He Chooses in any way He Wills.

3. A person once asked Hadrat about the essence and meaning of hāl. He replied: "Every person possesses an animalistic attributes within him, and the attributes of different animals are all different. This animalistic attribute is attached to this world and it derives comfort from it. Every person also possesses a rūh (soul) which is attached to the Hereafter, and it derives its comfort from the Hereafter. When the rūh inclines towards that world, the person's animalistic power is pained. It becomes agitated and restless. If the animalistic power is weak, it will be overpowered and become unconscious, while the rūh will continue with its task. If the animalistic power is slightly strong, it trembles a bit and falls unconscious. If it is very strong, the rūh continues with its task while the animalistic power continues to tremble. The effects which follow are in accordance with its strength. If a person possesses the strength of a lion, his hāl will reach the level of perfection and he will possess the pinnacle of bravery and courage. Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib has written on this subject in detail in *Hama'āl*.

4. When I went to Makkah Mu'azzamah, I met an ascetic by the name of Sayyid Qāsim Naqshbandī. The residents of Makkah were following him [at that time]. There was a person who used to make disparaging remarks about the Naqshbandī elders in his presence,

but the pious man [Sayyid Qāsim Naqshbandī] used to tolerate whatever this person said.

One day he became angry and directed his attention (*tawajjuh*) towards him. This person started trembling. When those who were appointed for the maintenance of the Ka'bah saw him in this condition, they thought that he was about to die. They placed him on a flat board, tied him up and transported him to his house. He continued trembling for eight days. His mother eventually went to Sayyid [Qāsim Naqshbandī] Sāhib and begged him to release him. He read over some water, gave it to her and said: "Were it not out of consideration for your old age, I would never have released him. I would have left him until he died in this state."

Hadrat then added: "Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib used to speak highly of him, so I went to visit him. He received me with much affection and said: 'It has become very difficult to eat *halāl* in present times, whereas it is extremely necessary [to eat *halāl*]. I do not accept anything from anyone. I make my own gold. You should also learn to make it.' I declined, but he persisted. So I told him: 'Hadrat, I do not have sufficient time to ask you to demonstrate [the process] to me, nor [do I have the time] to watch you make it. Furthermore, I have come for *hajj*. It would not be appropriate for me to go about learning how to make gold. However, if you insist, you can write the formula down for me.'

Sayyid [Qāsim Naqshbandī] Sāhib wrote the formula down, gave it to me and said: 'If you forget anything, you may consult me.' I returned and related the entire story to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He said: 'Don't ever make it. In fact, you should even cast that formula out of your mind, because this will affect your *tawakkul* (reliance upon Allāh ﷻ).' I followed Hājī Sāhib's instructions. I placed the formula in my bag with the intention of giving it to my friend, Hakīmī, who had asked me to bring something for him. I felt this would be a nice gift for him. When I

returned [to Gangoh] and Hakīm Diyā'ad-Dīn came to meet me, I gave him the formula as it was, without even looking at it, and forgot about it after that." Then Hadrat added: "Bhāi, *al-hamdulillāh*, no need of mine was ever left unfulfilled."

5. Shāh Nānak, whom the Sikhs look up to, is from amongst the *khulafā'* of Hadrat Bābā Farīd ad-Dīn Shakarganj *rahimahullāh*. He was from amongst the *ahl-e-jadhb* (a *majdhūb*, one who is absorbed in meditation and not in full possession of his senses). His condition therefore became a bit doubtful and Muslims did not pay much attention to him. The Sikhs, and some other nations, became quite infatuated with him after seeing his *kashf* and *karāmāt*.

6. A *khādim* asked Hadrat about [the permissibility of] thinking of one's Shaykh and bringing him into one's imagination. Hadrat replied: "Thoughts are of two types: (1) [The type of thoughts] which enters a person's mind on its own and automatically. For example, a father thinking of his son, and so forth. So, if a person thinks of his Shaykh automatically out of love for him, there is nothing wrong [with it]. (2) The other type is when thoughts of a person are deliberately brought into the mind and the person starts imagining and picturing his Shaykh. There is no need for this."

7. A person asked someone: "Miyā, do you have a *pīr*?" He replied: "Yes, I have many *pīrs*, but there are two who are my original *pīrs*. One is a parrot and the other is a policeman."

[This is how a policeman became my *pīr*]: There was a policeman who used to live in my residential area. He would always wake up early, have a wash, wear his uniform and go to the king for whom he was working. I continued observing him in this way for a long time. One day I thought to myself that, if he had to stay away from work, the king would dismiss him. In like manner, if I were to become neglectful of presenting myself before my *Āllāh*, and became heedless of His remembrance, I would [also] be dismissed

– just like the policeman. Ever since that day, I became fully engrossed in Allāh's remembrance and I have never omitted it."

"This is how a parrot became my *pīr*: One of my neighbours had a domesticated parrot as a pet. It used to talk very sweetly and captivate the people with its speech. One day, a cat attacked it, and when its claws scratched the parrot, the parrot said: 'Tīn.' It could not remember any other word. At that point, it forgot all its past chattering and singing. I was watching this scene and I thought to myself that, in the same way, when a person falls under the claws of death, he forgets everything. Apart from his original condition – which is his natural condition – he does not remember anything else. I left all other occupations and became engrossed in Allāh's remembrance so that, at the time of my death, I may utter nothing except the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ."

Hadrat then added: "This is why we engage in Allāh's remembrance. At our final time of departure from this world, nothing but Allāh's Name must issue forth from our mouths."

8. It was about ten o' clock in the morning when Hadrat was lying on his bed. He fell asleep and woke up a short while later. He said: "I just dreamt that I was on hajj in Makkah Mu'azzamah." He continued: "Whenever anyone dreamt of performing hajj and asked Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib for its interpretation, he would say: 'You will perform hajj.' However, I am adding something [to this interpretation]: 'If you do not go on hajj [although you dreamt it], you will certainly receive the reward of [having performed] hajj. I am saying this because there was once a *buzurg* who went for hajj. When he completed his hajj, he had a dream in which someone said to him: 'Three hundred thousand people came for hajj this year but not a single person's hajj was accepted, except for one person who did not come for hajj – yet his hajj was accepted.' The *buzurg* said to him: 'It is most surprising! How can the hajj of a person who did not go for hajj be accepted?' He replied: 'It has certainly been

accepted. There is no doubt about it.' Then the *buzurg* said: 'Very well. Give me his whereabouts. I would like to meet him and ask him.' The person gave him a name and described his features, and told him that the man lived in such and such a city.

The *buzurg* woke up from his sleep and went out in search of this person. When he met him, he related his dream to him and said: 'Now you tell me, what act did you do which earned you this reward?' He replied: 'I do not find myself doing anything worthy apart from performing the *fard salāh*.' The *buzurg* said: 'Think carefully. There is certainly a special deed which resulted in a *hajj-e-mabrūr* (accepted *hajj*) being recorded in your book of deeds.'

After some time, the man said: 'Yes, now I remember! I had collected money to go for *hajj*. *Al-hamdulillāh*, all the preparations were made, but I was delayed in departing. My wife was expecting. I was asleep one night when she woke me up in the middle of the night and said: 'I really feel like eating some meat.' I asked her: 'From where must I get meat in the middle of the night?' She persisted saying: 'I don't know where you are going to get it from, but I want to eat meat now!'

I was perplexed, but I got up and agreed to go [and look for meat] merely to please her. The moment I left the house, I caught a whiff of meat cooking in my neighbour's house. I went towards his house, stood at his door and called out to him. He became agitated when he heard my voice and came outside. I said to him: 'Meat is cooking in your house and my expectant wife is demanding to have some meat right now. I will really appreciate it if you could give me some meat.'

When he heard my request, he suddenly fell silent, lowered his head and said: 'Meat is certainly being cooked in my house but it is of no use to you.' I asked: 'What kind of meat is this that you can eat, but we cannot eat?' He deferred the answer and said: 'You had

better believe me. If the meat was suitable for you to eat, by Allāh, I would not have had any reason not to give you some.' I persisted and insisted: 'At least tell me what meat it is.' When he saw no way out, tears welled up in his eyes and he said: 'For the last four days my entire family has been starving. Seeing as we had no alternative, we were forced to slaughter a dog. Its meat is presently being cooked so that we can eat it and save our lives.'

I shivered upon hearing my neighbour's story and returned silently to my house. I reprimanded myself saying: 'Here is my neighbour in a state of compulsion where *harām* has become *halāl* for him, while I am intending to go for *hajj*.' I took out all the money which I had collected and went to give it to my neighbour. Initially he refused it, but upon my insistence he accepted. It is probably this one deed which was accepted by Allāh ﷻ. I do not know of anything else.' The *buzurg* said: 'Congratulations to you. It is certainly this one deed which caused you to be included in the *hajj* and has enabled you to be blessed with acceptance amongst [a crowd of] 300 000 people.'"

9. Pīr Jīyo Muḥammad Ja'far Sāhib Sādḥaurwī asked: "Ḥadrat, is *kāmiyā* (transmuting the baser metals into gold) made from compounds or from natural objects?" Ḥadrat replied: "It is made from compounds, but you must never learn this art. A person had given me the formula to transmute the baser metals into gold, but I never thought of using the formula, nor did I [even] bother to remember the formula." Ḥadrat added: "Ḥadrat Murshidunā Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* once related that a person had given him a formula and said: 'You can make gold if you follow this.' Ḥadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* told him: 'I left India and settled down here in Makkah Mu'azzamah in search of Allāh ﷻ and not in search of learning this art.'"

10. Pīrjī Sāhib relates: "A person, who has an affinity for Sufis, once told me that Shāh Qamīs *rahimahullāh* was not buried here in

Sādhaurah. [He said that] people had merely built a grave here and popularized it. After hearing this, I also started having doubts about a [certain] righteous-looking person, and decided to verify it with Hadrat.

A few days later I went to Gangoh. I thought about this story and wanted to seat myself near Hadrat with the intention of verifying it, but I was so overawed that I could not speak. A short while later, Hadrat said: 'During the days when Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was living in Panjlāsah, Rāu Sirāj ad-Dīn Khān – the grandson of 'Abdullāh Khān – came to Gangoh. I decided to accompany him to Panjlāsah with the intention of visiting Hadrat [Hājī Sāhib].

When we reached Sādhaurah, we did not enter the town itself. We merely visited Shāh Qamīs's grave – which was on the outskirts of the town – and continued on our journey. When we reached Panjlāsah, I said to Hadrat: 'Someone informed me that Hadrat Qamīs was not buried in Sādhaurah.' Hadrat Murshidunā replied: 'The person who informed you is wrong. Hadrat Shāh Qamīs always used to be where his grave is at present. When I went to Sādhaurah, he received me very affectionately because I had pledged *bay'ah* in the *silsilah* of Shāh Raḥam 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.'

Hadrat Murshidunā Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* [always] used to say: 'Shāh Qamīs *rahimahullāh* used to pay much attention to me because I had pledged *bay'ah* in the *silsilah* of Shāh Raḥam 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.'

11. One day, Hadrat addressed Maulwī Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Madanī, saying: "Miyā Maulwī Sayyid! You did not leave Madīnah Munawwarah to serve tea here. Carry out the task for which you came. It is not good to spend your time in futile disputes." Hadrat continued: "Hadrat Bābā Farīd *rahimahullāh* was having his

moustache clipped one day when he suddenly said: '*Allāh, Allāh.*' The barber said: 'Hadrat, stop your *Allāh, Allāh* for a short while or else your blessed lip will get clipped.' Hadrat Bābā Sāhib replied: 'I can exercise patience over my lip getting cut, but I cannot exercise patience over discarding Allāh's remembrance.'"

12. On one occasion, a person from Meerut presented himself [before Hadrat] and said: "Hadrat, my wife is under the influence of evil spirits. People are saying that Ilāh Bakhsh is responsible for this." Hadrat replied: "Bhāi, a sign of Ilāh Bakhsh is that he makes a person laugh, cry, engage in *dhikr*, recite the Qur'ān and so on. If a sick person experiences such a condition, you can deduce that he is influenced by Ilāh Bakhsh. As for us ... we have to engage solely in Allāh's remembrance. We do not stoop before idols."

Hadrat continued: "There is a Pīrjī Ghulām Muḥammad here who used to practise *hādirāt* (invocation of evil spirits), amongst other things. He once related to me: 'I went out into the forest one day. In the forest, two people carried me and took me away. They left me in a small Buddhist village in the forest. I saw an army of several thousand people who were about to attack me. They were saying: 'Kill him, kill him!' I was terrified and completely bewildered. Suddenly an old, grey-haired man arrived and addressed the people, saying: 'Leave him alone! Why do you want to kill him?' The old man then carried me and left me in the forest near Gangoh. He told me: 'Give up the *hādirāt* which you practise out of greed for a few rupees, or else you will lose your life – as you were on the verge of doing today.'"

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī continued: "Coincidentally, Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib arrived, so I related this story of Pīrjī Ghulām Muḥammad to him."

13. Shaykh Jalāl ad-Dīn Thānesarī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Shāh Qamīs *rahimahullāh* were contemporaries, and they were on

friendly terms with one another.

14. A beardless youngster came to Hadrat one day and requested *bay'ah*. Hadrat did not accept his *bay'ah* and said: "The father of Mujaddid Alf Thānī Sirhindī *rahimahullāh* came to Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* to pledge *bay'ah* to him. He was a youngster at the time, so Hadrat [Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs] said to him: 'Go and study first and, once you have learnt the different sciences, you must pledge *bay'ah* to my son, Rukn ad-Dīn'.

Subsequently, this is what happened. After Shāh Sāhib passed away, Mujaddid Sāhib's father came to Gangoh, pledged *bay'ah* to Maulwī Rukn ad-Dīn and continued the *silsilah*." Hadrat then added: "This is why I do not accept *bay'ah* from young boys. Son, go and study first. You may pledge *bay'ah* once you have completed your studies."

15. On one occasion, Hadrat said: "Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Balkhī *rahimahullāh*, and Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh* were contemporaries. Once, someone went to the king in Delhi with a slandering comment against his [the king's] son. The person told the king that his son had gone to Mujaddid Sāhib and Shāh Nizāmuddīn Sāhib in order to ask them to make *du'ā* against his father so that he could die. The king was infuriated. He imprisoned Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib in the Gwalior fort, and issued an order of banishment against Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Sāhib. Thus Shāh Sāhib left Thānesar for Balkh, and he resided there until his death. Ever since that day, we consider India to be *dār al-kufr* (a land under the rule and authority of disbelievers). This is [the reason] why the *auliyā*' of Allāh ﷺ do not remain here. As for those who remain ... they do so solely for the sake of [giving] guidance to people."

16. One day, Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, why is Qalandar Sāhib's grave [found] in two places – Karnāl and Pānīpat?" Hadrat replied: "His original grave is in Pānīpat. When

Qalandar Sāhib fell extremely ill in Pānīpat, his followers in Karnāl went to fetch him. By the time they reached Pānīpat, he had already passed away. The people of Pānīpat did not allow his body to be taken away. In order to avoid shame, these people [who had arrived to collect him] made a shape that resembled a corpse, took it to Karnāl, concealed it, and buried it."

Then Hadrat added: "In the beginning, our Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib was overcome by restlessness and agitation. He remained in meditation for three days at the gravesite of Hadrat Qalandar Sāhib [in Karnāl], but could not fathom anything. Eventually he saw Hadrat Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who asked him: 'Imdādullāh! Why are you seated here?' He then dug up the grave and showed Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib that there was nothing inside it."

17. "One *buzurg*, Shāh Hakīmullāh Sāhib, used to reside in Sahāranpūr. Once a person came to greet him and said: 'Hadrat, I am going to Hyderabad Deccan.' Shāh Sāhib said: 'Very well, you may go. On your way to Hyderabad you will pass by a certain town. There is a *buzurg* who lives on the outskirts of the town. This is his name [Shāh Sāhib then gave the person's name]. You must meet him and convey my *salām* to him.'

The man then departed and headed for Hyderabad. When he reached the place, he saw a temple which was surrounded by many Hindu fakirs. They all had idols in their hands and were worshipping these idols. The person was astounded, proceeded slowly, and asked one of the Hindu fakirs: 'Who lives in this temple?' He replied: 'Our guru lives here.' When he asked him what their guru's name was, he gave the same name which Shāh Sāhib had mentioned. The man then told the fakir: 'Go and inform your guru that I am here to convey Shāh Hakīmullāh Sāhib Sahāranpūrī's *salām* to him.' The fakir replied: 'We cannot go inside. However, I will convey your message at the entrance. Those

who are there will convey it to the next entrance, and it will eventually reach the gurujī.'

When the message eventually reached the gurujī, he called for this travelling guest. When the person entered, he saw an elderly man with a white beard, sitting on a clean platform – engaged in the recitation of the Qur'ān. When he completed his recitation, he placed the Qur'ān in a *juzdān* (small Qur'ān bag), turned towards him, and started speaking to him. The traveller said to him: 'Hadrat, I was astounded when I saw the scene on the outside. What is this assembly of idol-worshipping fakirs all about?' The *buzurg* replied: 'Miyā, I'm not surprised that you ask! All those who are outside and who hold me in such high esteem are Hindus. They are prohibited from entering here. When they are eventually slightly reformed, they will be permitted to come to the entrance. When their condition improves further, they will be allowed to come inside and become Muslims. Those whom you see around me are all Muslims. Once they have perfected their Islam, I will ask them to depart from another door. Those who are departing will never meet those who are on the outside. This sequence will continue until it is my time to depart from this world. Each one of those whom you see here, hold different ranks and positions. Each one is taught to read something different from the other, and each one is prohibited from relating his own condition to the others. In this way, many *kāfirs* (disbelievers) became Muslims and departed. If they were to be openly invited towards Islam, the residents of this place will kill the Muslims. I will also be killed, because I have adopted this method of serving Islam and guiding people towards *Dīn*.'"

After relating this story, Hadrat said: "Most of the *buzurgs* conceal themselves and bring the creation onto the path of guidance in this manner. Bābā Nānuk was also a Muslim and he used to guide people secretly. The first line of poetry in his *granth* (a sacred book of the Sikhs) reads thus:

"First read the Name of God, the second name is [that] of the Rasūl, then read the third name, which is [that] of the Nānuk."

18. During the Indian mutiny, Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib rahimahullāh spent some time in hiding in the town of Kīthal. I was also at Hadrat's service [at that time]. One *buzurg* used to come to meet him very often. The Sikhs held this person in high esteem and would accompany him to meet Hadrat Hājī Sāhib. Upon seeing the respect which their guru accorded to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, they also started showing respect towards him.

19. One day, Pīrjī Muḥammad Ja'far Sāhib Sādhaurwī said: "Sufi Ismā'īl Madanpūrī – the new [revert] Muslim – conveys *salām* to you and says: 'I have tried my utmost to explain to my mother, but she refuses to become a Muslim. Make *du'ā'* that Allāh ﷻ inspires her towards Islam as well.'" [Upon hearing this] Hadrat said: "Tell Sufi Ismā'īl to casually and jokingly place a piece of meat in his mother's mouth every few days. The darkness of *kufīr* will disappear gradually from her heart. *Inshā Allāh*, she will embrace Islam within a few days."

On the same subject Hadrat added: "A Muslim legislator was my friend. He once related to me: 'A Hindu clerk and I were employed at the same place and he used to live near my house. As per their custom, he used to sit on a *chauka* (a place where Hindus sit and eat their food) to eat his *rotī*. One day I went to his house and saw him sitting on his *chauka*, eating *rotī*. I approached his *chauka* and stood there. He became quite edgy and said: 'Bhāijī, stand away from my *chauka*.' I laughed it off and left a short while later.

The following day I went to his house at the same time, and jokingly touched his *chauka* with the head of my *lāthī* (fighting stick). He jumped up and said: 'O, what have you done? You have spoilt my *chauka*.' Since we were co-workers and were always together at our workplace, the Hindu could not say anything more

than that. I laughed and remained silent after that.

On the third day, I presented myself at the same time and placed my shoe on his *chauka*. When he saw this, he felt very upset and pulled a stern face, but said nothing. On the fourth day I went and stood on his *chauka*. After doing this a few times, he gave up his habit of eating at his *chauka* and the dislike which he had for Muslims disappeared. I do not know whether he later became a Muslim or not.”

20. On one occasion Hadrat said: “These days, people deliver lectures and gloat thereafter. If anyone [ever] went to Maulwī Nawāb Qutb ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and said to him: ‘Hadrat, my wife did not hear the lecture which you had delivered’, he would immediately go with the person and repeat his [entire] lecture at the person’s house.” Then Hadrat added: “Whenever I used to visit Nawāb Sāhib, he would become very happy and say: ‘Āhā! It is Rashīd Aḥmad.’ This was during my student days and, at that time, I had not yet gauged his true worth, but now I think of him quite often.”

21. “Shāh Aḥmad Sa’īd Sāhib was a very pious man, yet he would still tell me that he could never become more pious than me.” Hadrat then added: “The majority of those who went away to live in the mountains, did so out of piety. But, how can we go? We are not able to be pious at all!”

22. “On one occasion, a person said to Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*: ‘Hadrat, parents love their children immensely, but children do not love their parents as much. What is the reason for this?’ Shāh Sāhib replied: ‘If a piece of flesh from the body is removed and kept away from it, the piece of flesh will not feel any pain. The pain will only be felt by the place from which the piece of flesh was removed.’”

23. "There was a *maulwī* who was opposed to Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was very obstinate, and would refute any statement which was made by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib. Once he sent a message to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib saying: 'Remember, whatever you label as *harām*, I will make it *halāl* and anything you consider *halāl*, I will declare it *harām*.' Shāh Sāhib responded spontaneously: 'We consider his mother to be *harām* to him. Now let us see if he can say that she is *halāl* for him!' The *maulwī sāhib* was dumbfounded by this reply.

24. A person once asked this question to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī: "Hadrat, do the bodies of the *auliyā*' decompose in their graves or do they remain intact?" He replied: "The bodies of some decompose, while others remain intact." Hadrat then added: "During the days while I was teaching at Shā'istah Khān's place in Sahāranpūr, two reliable people from Delhi related to me that two corpses had been removed from an old grave in Delhi. One was that of a male, and the other was that of a thirteen to fourteen-year-old girl. They found that the *kafans* (shrouds) of both these people were as white as the day when they were first used, and that their bodies had not decomposed in the least. The bodies were in exactly the same condition as it was on the day they were buried."

25. "There was a robber who was notorious for his robbing and looting. He had spent his entire life in this activity. When he became old and weak, he thought to himself that, if he were to steal now, he would certainly get caught. He would have to resort to a strategy which would ensure that he could live his old age in comfort.

He thought deeply about this and eventually concluded that there was no occupation better than *pīrī murīdī* (becoming a Shaykh and having *murīds*). This would enable him to spend the last days of his life in comfort. He set out into the forest which was near a village, and sat on a river bank with a *tasbīh* in his hand. Daily he would

perform the five *fard salāhs* and read with his *tasbīh*. All those who happened to pass by would see him. After a few days, the villagers started developing great respect for him and they started discussing him amongst themselves. They said: 'This is [definitely] some great *buzurg* and we are fortunate to have him here.'

People started visiting him and tending to his needs. Daily he would receive his two meals, and each person wanted to be the only one serving him. Then the people built a small cottage for him on the river bank.

This man chose to speak very little. He adopted the appearance of the *mashā'ikh* and started reading some *wazīfahs*. As the people started to increase their visits to him, they started expressing their desire to pledge *bay'ah* at his hands. He initiated them as his *murīds* and instructed them to read *kalimah tauhīd*. After pledging *bay'ah*, the *murīds* returned home and continued with their work. They thought to themselves: 'The Miyā Sāhib is living all alone in the forest and is probably experiencing difficulties at night. Let us go and live by the river bank and we will be able to see to all his needs'. Thus they also started living there, and began engaging in the *dhikr* of *Lā ilāha illallāh* throughout the night until the forest was filled with the sound of excessive *dhikr*.

People came to him from distant places and offered him gifts. When he progressed further [in status], his *khādims* built a public kitchen and started to feed all those who attended. This only served to increase the number of people who arrived there. By Allāh's Power, within a short while, about ten to twenty *khādims* reached their objective [of Allāh's proximity] by virtue of their conviction.

[One day] The *khādims* had a discussion amongst themselves and decided: 'Let us try and determine what level our *Hadrat* has reached.' For six months they pondered and mused over this, but they were unable to estimate their Shaykh's rank. Eventually they

concluded: 'Hadrat's rank is so high that it is beyond us to estimate it.' They jointly presented themselves before him and said: 'Hadrat, for six months we have pondered over this, but still we are unable to estimate your rank. We ask you in Allāh's Name to tell us.'

By virtue of living in the company of these pious people and engaging in excessive salāh and fasting, the pīr Sāhib had developed the quality of speaking the truth. Thus he replied: 'Brothers, I am a robber who has spent his entire life earning from robbing and looting. When I could no longer engage in this activity due to my old age, I thought of this strategy so that I could earn a living. As for the science of Sufism ... I have no expertise in it.'

The khādims said: 'No Hadrat, you are merely saying this out of modesty and humility.' He took an oath and said: 'By Allāh, I am speaking the truth. I am not saying it out of modesty. I am certainly not qualified for anyone to pledge bay'ah at my hands. I am a very sinful and worthless person. You people have reached this high rank of perfection solely by virtue of your own conviction.'

The khādims realized that he was speaking the truth. They turned to Allāh ﷻ and begged of Him saying: 'O Allāh! You have guided us through Your Perfect Mercy on account of this person. We beg of You to include him amongst your special servants.' Allāh ﷻ accepted their du'ā' and included the pīr amongst His special servants."

After relating this story, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "I also do not know anything. I merely help people to make taubah in the hope that it will be a means to [attaining] my salvation."

26. Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmād Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, what type of person was this Hāfiz Latāfat 'Alī, who is well-known by the name of Hāfiz Mendho Shaykpūrī?" Hadrat replied: "He was a thorough kāfir." Hadrat then smiled and said: "Dāmin 'Alī

Jalālābādī [mentioned below] was totally immersed in *tauhīd*.”

27. On one occasion Hadrat said: “Dāmin ‘Alī Jalālābādī had many prostitutes in Sahāranpūr who were his *murīds*. On one occasion he was staying over at one of their houses, when all his other *murīds* came to visit their Miyā Sāhib. One particular prostitute did not arrive. The Miyā Sāhib asked: ‘Why did so and so not come?’ They replied: ‘Miyā Sāhib! We asked her several times to come with us to visit Miyā Sāhib, but she replied: ‘I am very sinful and wicked, with what face can I go to Miyā Sāhib? I am not fit to visit him.’ [Upon hearing this] The Miyā Sāhib said: ‘No, you must definitely bring her to me.’

The prostitutes fetched her, and when she appeared before him, he asked: ‘Bībī, why did you not come?’ She replied: ‘Hadrat, I was ashamed of coming to you because I have disgraced myself.’ The Miyā Sāhib responded: ‘Bībī, why are you ashamed? Who is the One Who does, and who is the One Who causes you to do? He is One.’

Upon hearing this, she went into a rage and said: ‘*Lā haula wa lā quwwata* ... (All Power and Might belongs to Allāh Alone). Even though I have disgraced myself and committed a sin, I will not even urinate on the face of such a *pīr*.’ The Miyā Sāhib felt [intensely] ashamed and dropped his face remorsefully. Thereupon the woman got up and departed.”

28. “Three people walked passed a heretic [someone who holds unconventional religious beliefs]. The first one passed by silently and hastily, without even looking in the direction of the atheist. The second person walked by slowly, and proceeded without uttering a word. The third person decided to refute the heretic, thus he stood there and started admonishing him. The heretic thought to himself: ‘This third person has certainly fallen into my trap. It is impossible for him to pass through my clutches. The second one is most likely

to come under my control, but the first person has saved himself and escaped.””

29. There was a discussion regarding the Rasūl Shāhī *faqīrs*. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: “Rasūl Shāh was a *faqīr* who resided in Alwar. Although he adhered to the injunctions of the Sharī’ah, he used to consume alcohol. He probably consumed it because, in his ignorance, he felt that his heart would be more inclined towards [good] deeds when he is in a state of intoxication.

He had a *murīd* by the name of Muḥammad Hanīf who had innovated the practice of shaving the head, beard, eyebrows and moustache. Fidā Husayn became his *khalīfah*, and he went to the extreme in prohibiting *ṣalāh*. He also said that, if a person is in a state of *janābat* (major impurity), it is sufficient [to purify himself] by merely applying the ash of cow dung over his entire body. This cursed person used to reject all the injunctions of the Sharī’ah. However, he was a man who had great influence (*taṣarruf*) on the hearts of people.

During the era of Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, he went to Delhi, and many people felt inclined towards him. Shāh Sāhib sent him a message saying: ‘You call yourself a Muslim, but you reject the Sharī’ah. It is not permissible for you to claim to be a Muslim while you reject the absolute tenets of Islam.’ He sent the following reply to Shāh Sāhib: ‘Do not come to me, and I will not come to you. Send me one of your students in whom you have total confidence and I will engage him in a debate.’

From amongst Shāh Sāhib’s students, ‘Abdullāh was considered a sharp-witted and capable student. He said: ‘Hadrat, send me.’ Shāh Sāhib said: ‘Very well, but if you need to know anything, you must ask me.’

It was the summer season. Delhi is generally hot, but the heat in

those days was far worse than it is today. In fact, the heat which we used to experience during our student days is not experienced at present. Anyway, it must have been even hotter in those days. As soon as the lessons for the day were completed, 'Abdullāh was sent for the debate. He reached Fidā Husayn in the extreme heat of the afternoon. He hosted 'Abdullāh with great hospitality and instructed his disciples to fan him. Then he said to 'Abdullāh: 'It is very hot at present. Take a rest and lie down for a while and we will have our debate later on.'

Thereupon, 'Abdullāh went to lie down. He was enjoying the coolness of the fans and soon fell asleep.' Fidā Husayn sat at his side and started focusing his attention on him. He instructed his disciples to put a cauldron on the fire. One of them said: 'Hadrat, no one is becoming a disciple, why are you asking us to put on the cauldron?' (It was probably a custom to put the cauldron on the fire when initiating a person as a disciple.) He warned the person saying: 'It is of none of your concern.'

After some time, when the *maulwī s̄ahib* woke up, he said: 'Make me your disciple.' The wretched Fidā Husayn had cast his spell on the *maulwī s̄ahib* while he was asleep. He said to him: 'Miyā, you came here to debate with me, and now you want to become my *murīd*?' He replied: 'Hadrat, that is history. Just make me your *murīd*.' Fidā Husayn had Maulwī 'Abdullāh's beard and moustache shaven off. He asked for the cauldron which his disciples had put onto the fire. When it was brought to him, he asked Maulwī 'Abdullāh: 'Can you take this to your *ustād* (teacher)?' 'Abdullāh replied: 'I will take it wherever you instruct me [to take it]. How can a servant refuse to carry out your orders?'

He took the cauldron to Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib. In the meantime, Shāh Sāhib had been awaiting his return and was repeatedly saying: 'The debate has probably been prolonged.' Just then 'Abdullāh arrived with the cauldron on his head. At that point

[in his life] Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was blind. Due to this, Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* always remained in Shāh Sāhib's company and was on quite informal terms with him. Upon seeing 'Abdullah's clean shaven face, he said: 'Hadrat, Maulwī 'Abdullāh is approaching and he looks like a clown.' Shāh Sāhib expressed surprise and said: 'You always say such senseless things.' Mīr Sāhib said: 'He is almost here. You will soon understand what I am saying.'

A short while later 'Abdullāh arrived and said: 'The *murshid* (Shaykh) has sent this. Take it if you want. If not, I am leaving.' Shāh Sāhib was astounded at what had occurred and said: 'Miyā, what doubt did you have which you could not answer? What has happened to you? What calamity has befallen you?' Shāh Sāhib continued asking him questions along this vein, but all he said was: 'Nothing has happened. I have become his *murīd*.' Shāh Sāhib became enraged and said: 'Get away from here.' 'Abdullāh replied: 'Very well. I am not bothered in the least.' Thereupon he left."

[On another occasion] Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was most likely speaking of the same 'Abdullāh when he said: "This effect remained with him thereafter, and he had the power of influencing anyone who came to him." Hadrat then mentioned a certain person and said: "He used to relate to me: 'I went to him once and the wretched person embraced me. A fire was immediately ignited in my heart and I fled from him there and then.'"

Hadrat said: "During my student days he ['Abdullāh] was present in Delhi. People throughout Delhi knew that they must not go near to that street." Once, after relating this incident, Hadrat added: "Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that when Dajjāl appears ... do not go near him. Go to the mountain tops and caves and seek refuge inside them.' Thousands among this creation will try to combat him, but they will all be influenced by him and become his followers. From this instruction of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the *taṣarruf* (influence) of the *ahl-e-*

bāṭil (those who are on falsehood), and the fact that they can overpower the *ahl-e-haqq*, becomes clear. Hadrat 'Īsā ﷺ will eventually arrive engage in combat with him [Dajjāl].”

30. Shāh Sulaymān Tūnisī had a *murīd* by the name of Miyā Dādā Bakhsh who used to read *ism-e-dhāt* (Allāh) 100 000 times, and *durūd sharīf* several thousand times daily.

Tawakkul Husayn was Fidā Husayn's *khalīfah*. Because he had taken away one of the *murīds* of his *pīr* [Shāh Sulaymān Tūnisī], Miyā Dādā Bakhsh went to Tawakkul Husayn – the buffoon – and complained to him saying: “It is not right of you to initiate someone else's *murīd* as your own *murīd*.” Tawakkul Husayn replied: “What does Sulaymān know about Sufism and asceticism? That is why I initiate his *murīds* and make them my *murīds*.”

When Miyā Dādā Bakhsh heard such a derogatory statement against his own Shaykh, he could not control himself. He became furious and started hurling abuses at him saying: “You are deviated yourself and are leading others astray. You do not even bother about *ṣalāh* and fasting.” Tawakkul Husayn also lost his temper, stared at him with red eyes and ordered his disciples: “Grab him by his ears and throw him out of here! What right does he have to confront me?”

“During this short meeting, Miyā Dādā Bakhsh had fallen under his influence and begged him to initiate him as his *murīd*. By the Grace of Allāh, Tawakkul Husayn was still in a rage, therefore he did not pay any heed to Miyā Dādā Bakhsh and did not accept his request. Instead, he repeated his order: “Grab him by his ears and throw him out of here!” The *murīds* grabbed Miyā Dādā Bakhsh by both his ears and shoved him outside. When he arrived downstairs, he somehow regained his senses and realized what request he had made. He fled from there immediately and went directly to his house.”

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī added: "Remember, you must always stay away from heretics [someone who believes in that which contradicts established religious teachings]. It is not good to go near them. I have seen this Tawakkul Husayn from a distance."

31. Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib once asked: "Qādī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī wrote in his book on *samā'* (singing) that Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* used to be fanatical about *samā'* and musical instruments. Is this correct?" Hadrat replied: "I do not consider it to be correct. The Qādī Sāhib was either misinformed about the fact that Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* liked musical instruments, or someone had added this point to his book."

32. "Shaykh Saundhā *rahimahullāh* wrote in *Iqtibās al-Anwār*:

*"Our learned scholars and saints have never ever listened to samā'.
In fact, they even regard rhythmic clapping [during dhikr] to be
incorrect."*

33. One Friday, a resident of Meerut arrived to pledge *bay'ah*. Hadrat initiated him into the Chishtīyyah lineage (*silsilah*) and said to him: "At present, the Chishtīyyah Tarīqah has been the most vilified, and there are people who say that there is no need to follow the Sharī'ah in the Chishtīyyah Tarīqah. Hadrat Jalāl ad-Dīn Thānesarī *rahimahullāh* was also from the Chishtīyyah *silsilah*. However, while he was on his deathbed and had no strength at all to move about, people brought him some medication. He asked them to pick him up and carry him off his bed. He was picked up and placed on the floor. Then he drank the medication and said: 'To drink medicine while lying down on a bed has not been established from the Sunnah.'"

There was a large assembly of people at the time when Hadrat was relating this story. The room was full and there were some people who were standing outside as well. They were all affected in some

way or another by Hadrat's words. There was probably not a single person amongst them who did not shed tears.

34. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib Murādābādī asked: "Did Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* really say:

قدمي على رأس كل ولي الله

"My feet are on the head of every walī of Allāh."

Hadrat replied: "It is certainly correct, and it refers to the *auliyā* of his time. Even if it is applied to the *auliyā* who came after him, then what would be so astonishing about it? After all, he was *sayyid al-auliyā* (the leader of the *auliyā*).

It is popularly believed that Hadrat Khwājah Mu'īn ad-Dīn Chishtī *rahimahullāh* had pledged *bay'ah* to Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*, but the present day Chishtīs do not accept this and they do not consider any personality to be equal to Hadrat Khwājah. My opinion is that, even if Hadrat Khwājah was the *murīd* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*, and thereafter surpassed him, there would be nothing wrong with that, because it is possible for a *murīd* to surpass his Shaykh. Man should not bother about according superiority to one elder over the other."

Hadrat then added: "While seated in Musjid-e-Khayf in Minā, one person from Phulwārī said that Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr [Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī] was the most superior. Another was saying that Hadrat Shaykh Mujaddid was the most superior. They continued arguing about this. Their argument became so heated that the first person eventually said that Hadrat Mujaddid was a *kāfir*, and the second person said that Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr was a *kāfir*. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ! This is why our elders mention the names of all four *mashā'ikh* at the time of *bay'ah* – so that we may maintain an equal affinity with all of them and benefit from the bestowal of all of

them. They do this despite giving the *shajarah* (lineage) of the Chishtīyyah only. This mentioning of the names of all four lineages has been adopted since the time of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib.”

35. There was a woman who deceived people, entered their houses, and stole things from them. Someone happened to mention her in Hadrat’s assembly. He said: “She ate the *rotī* with sugar, and earned of this world through deception.”

[After saying this] Hadrat added: “There was [once] an educated person who became discontented with his paltry livelihood. When he could find no solution, he went on a journey, reached a certain place, and pretended to be an ignorant and speech-impaired person. He went to a *maktab* and expressed his desire to learn to read the Qur’ān. The teacher started his instruction and he started learning, but he could not memorize anything. He would [pretend to] cry in his deception and people would take pity on him. They would think to themselves: ‘This poor person is trying so hard but his memory is so weak that he cannot memorize anything.’

One morning he woke up laughing, and said in a happy tone: ‘I saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ in my dream and he placed his blessed saliva in my mouth. As a result, I know everything now.’ Seeing as he had always been an educated person, he started to read everything he knew. [People were deceived into thinking that he was a pious personality], so they held him in high esteem and he enjoyed a large following.”

36. An *‘ālim* from Karnāl said: “Hadrat, we have been hearing some stories about the *buzurghs*. Some people say that they saw their hands, legs, heads and torsos separate from each other.” Hadrat replied: “My maternal uncle (or he may have mentioned someone else) related to us: ‘One afternoon, I went to visit Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad Jhanjhānwī *rahimahullāh*. The door of his room was closed but it had not been fully latched. When I opened the latch, I

saw Hadrat's entire body separated. The moment he saw me, all his body parts became attached once again. Hadrat Miyājī Sāhib sat up and said: 'Do not relate this to anyone.'" After relating this story, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "But this is not a level of perfection."

37. Maulānā Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, what is the reason behind the fact that everyone accepts and likes Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, but speaks ill of [some] other members of the same family?" Hadrat Imām Rabbānī replied: "Miyā, if I were to give the reason to you, you would not like it and neither would I. The fact of the matter is that some people had some objections against Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, and Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib tried to ward off these objections.

On one occasion, after Shāh Sāhib had delivered a talk, one person asked him: 'Hadrat, what is the ruling with regard to reading *dugānah* (two prostrations, or *ṣalāt ash-shukr* – *ṣalāh* to express gratitude)?' Shāh Sāhib replied: 'Bhāi, it is not mentioned anywhere in the *Aḥādīth*, but it is a practice of the *mashā'ikh*.' Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib was also present at the time and said: 'Hadrat, the person did not ask about any *Hadīth* or practice of the *mashā'ikh*. He was only asking about its permissibility or impermissibility.' Again Shāh Sāhib offered the same reply. Then Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib said: 'State clearly whether it is permissible or not.' Then the questioner then also insisted: 'Yes, this is the object of my question.' Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib reprimanded Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib saying: 'You want people to hurl obscenities at me. Some time ago I wrote a ruling on the verse وَمَا أَهْلُ and people are still hurling abuses at me.' Mīr Mahbūb 'Alī Sāhib then turned to the questioner and said: 'Listen, Hadrat considers this *ṣalāh* to be impermissible, but he cannot give a clear answer because he fears people's abuses against him.'"

After relating this story, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "There is no benefit in adding to, or elaborating on any point. Important facts are

not forgotten [so there is no need to go into any more detail]. Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib and Maulānā Ismā'īl Sāhib followed the same school of thought, but Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib made some in-depth statements while discussing subsidiary matters. There was no benefit in this. On the other hand, Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib proclaimed a clear prohibition and most people accepted it."

38. "Shayṭān also deludes some *buzurghs* into learning *kīmiyā* (transmutation of baser metals into gold) so that they may use it to obtain *halāl* sustenance." Ḥadrat then added: "A foreigner once came to Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and related: 'We went to the mountains of Shimlah in search of a certain herb for *kīmiyā*, but we could not find it. Since we have come all the way to India, we decided to visit you as well. When we return home, we will make proper inquiries about the herb from our teacher.'

In order to discourage the foreigner from such thoughts, Shāh Sāhib said to him: 'What if you come back [a second time] from such a distant place and still do not find it?' He replied: 'How long will it elude us? If not the second or the third time, we are bound to find it at some time or the other.' Upon hearing this, tears flowed from Shāh Sāhib's eyes and he addressed his *murīds*: 'Look at the great courage he has for fulfilling his worldly needs, while you people remain here with me for [only] six months to a year, and then you say that you have not acquired anything!'"

39. Maulānā Wilāyat Ḥusayn Sāhib relates: "On one occasion I asked: 'It is popularly believed that Shayṭān cannot adopt the appearance of a Shaykh. Is this correct?' Ḥadrat replied: 'Yes, but only if a *murīd* has acquired unity in purpose. This means that the *murīd*'s conviction in his Shaykh has become so firmly entrenched that he does not consider anyone else in this world as his means of guidance'... or he said something similar. He also said: 'The meaning of *tauḥīd-e-maṭlab* is explained very clearly in *Risālah Makkīyyah*.' I asked: 'Does this mean that the *murīd* must not even

differ with his Shaykh regarding *masā'il*?' Hadrat replied: 'No. There can definitely be differences of opinion regarding *masā'il*.'

On another occasion the Maulānā personally asked: "Hadrat, with regard to deriving benefit from the graves of the *auliyā'*, *Tasfiyyatul Qulūb* states that the person must imagine the physical form of his Shaykh." Hadrat replied: "This only applies to the *ahl-e-nisbat*."

40. Hadrat once gave the explanation of the following saying: "*The cursed one has died. There is neither fātihah nor durūd for him.*" He explained: "When visiting the fort of 'Abdullāh Khān, we learnt that *fātihah* refers to the food which is fed to the poor in Allāh's ﷻ Name, and that the food which the relatives partake in the following day is known as *durūd*."

While on this subject, Hadrat spoke about *kuthrā*, which has been mentioned in Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Sāhib's translation. He said: "The letter *kāf* (k) in *kuthrā* is used for negation. It means 'soiled or impure' and it is the opposite of 'clean'. Hadrat added: "Shāh Sāhib translated the verse *وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ* as: *do not puff out your cheeks* (*gāl* in Urdu). People objected to this translation, and said that the word *خَد* (*rukhsār* in Urdu) refers to the upper [part of the] cheek, while the word *gāl* refers to the middle [part of the] cheek. How can this translation then be correct? Shāh Sāhib had translated it according to the colloquial mode of expression which was commonly used in society [during his time]."

41. On one occasion Hadrat was speaking about Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib Thānwī. He related: "He was a handsome man with a fair, reddish complexion and deep set eyes. Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* loved him dearly and would teach him Hadīth and other subjects on special occasions.

Out of love for him, Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

'Maulwī Sāhib, why don't you get married to Shāh Sāhib's daughter?' The Maulwī Sāhib replied: 'I will first have to obtain my grandmother's consent. I will only be able to give you an answer after that.' The Maulwī Sāhib then wrote to his grandmother who replied as follows: 'Shāh Sāhib and we are not equal in social standing. He comes from a lower caste. I do not approve [of this].'

Look at Allāh's Power! A few days later, the Maulwī Sāhib got married to a dancing girl. People started passing remarks and said: 'Yes, Shāh Sāhib may not have been of their caste, but look at the type of girl he got married to now!' Later the Maulwī Sāhib entered into two other marriages, but he did not enjoy life. It is so true: 'Those who do not listen to the *buzurgs* will eventually regret their actions'. His last marriage was in Ambheta."

42. Munshī Ibrāhīm Khān Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, when I read the Qur'ān without *wudū*', I feel restless, but I cannot remain in *wudū*' all the time." Hadrat replied: "Instead of turning the pages with your hands, turn them with a pocketknife or something else. Read from a large Qur'ān. It is *makrūh* to read from a small Qur'ān." Then Hadrat added: "Hīndan is a small river near the *madrasah* of Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm Dehlawī. Once a box fell into the river and a corpse emerged from it. Its shroud (*kafan*) was dirty. The body floated a distance and stopped at a stream. After a short while another box fell into the river and again a corpse emerged from it, but this one's *kafan* was spotlessly clean. It floated and joined the other corpse – as though one was waiting for the other – and they both washed away together. People [in the area] started making enquiries about these corpses. After much investigation, an old woman informed them that they had both been *Hāfiẓ* of the Qur'ān."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī explained: "I am inclined to think that the one whose *kafan* was spotlessly clean used to recite the Qur'ān with *wudū*', while the other one recited without *wudū*'." In reply to

Munshī Sāhib's question, Hadrat also said the following: "The parents of a Hāfiz will be made to wear a crown on the Day of Resurrection. Its light will be like that of the sun."

43. One day the discussion revolved around certain *ta'wīlāt* (interpretations). [With reference to this] Hadrat said: "Yes, the *maulwīs* are good at interpretations. There was once a Qādī Sāhib (judge). Someone came and told him: "Qādījī, one ox gored another ox with his horns. What is the Sharī'ah's ruling in this regard?" The Qādī Sāhib replied: 'What ruling can there possibly be on such a matter?' The person replied: 'Hadrat, the attacking ox belongs to a person of a low caste, and the ox which was attacked belongs to you'. The Qādī Sāhib said: 'Really, is this what happened? Very well, I will check the books and see what the ruling is.'

The Qādī Sāhib then asked for a book, looked through a few pages and said: 'The red book⁴⁰ states thus: Why did the low caste ox attack the other ox? It is because it is strong and robust. The owner [of the low caste ox] will now have to give an ox in exchange for the other, and pay a fine of five rupees.'"

44. Munshī Sāhib once asked: "Which sins cause the cancellation of *bay'ah*?" Hadrat replied: "A Hadīth states:

المرء مع من أحب

"A person shall be with those whom he loved."

Thus, as long as a person remains in accordance with the wishes of his beloved, his *bay'ah* will remain valid. If he acts against him, it will be cancelled."

⁴⁰ "Taken from the red book" is an Urdu saying which refers to something which has been sucked out of one's thumb.
[Khanqah Sheikh Zakariyya.]

While on the same subject, Hadrat said: "There was a Christian in Kānpūr who had a high post. He became a Muslim but, in his wisdom, he concealed his Islam. Coincidentally, he was transferred to another place. He informed his Maulwī Sāhib, from whom he had learnt about Islam, about his transfer and asked him to refer him to a religious person from whom he could continue acquiring knowledge regarding Islam. The Maulwī Sāhib sent one of his capable students to him.

Some time later the Christian fell ill, so he gave some money to the student and said to him: 'When I die and the Christians bury me in their graveyard, you must come during the night, remove me from the grave and bury me in a Muslim graveyard.' Subsequently, this is what happened. When the student opened his grave that night, he noticed that the Christian's body was not there. However, the Maulwī Sāhib was lying inside. He became very concerned and thought to himself: 'How did my teacher land up in here?' After making some enquiries he learnt that the Maulwī Sāhib used to like the ways and mannerisms of the Christians and that he felt attracted to these ways. Thus, remaining in the company of the pious earns rewards and it is a means of salvation.

The other thing which cancels *bay'ah* is one's persistence in committing major sins. Although the person is prohibited from committing them, he persists in his sin and does not pay any heed to the grave warnings. The *bay'ah* is also cancelled in such a case. This point forms part of the previous point which I had mentioned.

As for the current condition of *pīrī murīdī* (the Shaykh-murīd relationship) ... [nowadays], regardless of what either of the two does, the *bay'ah* will remain unchanged – even if the two should have a shoe fight against one another! Such a *bay'ah* is not worthy of consideration."

45. "Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib has written that Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ likes and prefers some religious-minded '*ulamā*' who emulate the Sunnah over certain Sufis."

46. "There was once a *buzurg* who was going somewhere. It happened to be one of the religious days of the Hindus in which they apply dyes to animals, and so forth. The *buzurg* was busy eating *pān* (betel leaf) when he came across a donkey which was not dyed. He spat on it and jokingly remarked: 'No one dyed you today, so I dyed you.'

After he passed away, a person saw him in a dream. He was in an overall good condition, but a snake was attached to his mouth. The person asked: 'Hadrat, how are you?' He replied: 'Everything is well, but I spat betel-leaf juice on a donkey one day and I am now being taken to task for it. I was asked: "Why did you emulate Our enemies?" Thus I am being punished and paying for my sin.'

47. "Some people come to me and say: 'Convey us to the pinnacle of perfection with just one look of yours. We cannot bear difficulties, hardships and striving.' They quote some stories of some *buzurgs* in this regard. Their similitude is like that of a person who was walking through a forest. He tripped and fell down. When he got up, he saw a trunk buried in the ground. He dug it up and saw that it was filled with gold and silver. Now, if after hearing this story, a person goes and walks around in the forest in the hope of finding such a treasure, will he be able to obtain it?"

48. Munshī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib once said: "The British have ruled this land for the past fifty-nine years. Can the Muslims not achieve such a feat?" Hadrat replied: "There were Muslims like Hadrat Khālīd ibn Walīd ؓ who was much stronger than them [the British]."

49. Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib once asked: "Why are the Sufis more famous than the jurists (*fuqahā'*), whereas they [the jurists] are the pillars of *Dīn*?" Hadrat replied: "Those who were Sufis were also *fuqahā'*. So, it was actually the *fuqahā'* who became famous. Secondly, it is due to the rank which the Sufis enjoyed that the *karāmāt* which they displayed, and their abstention from this world, caused them to become more famous."

50. "The *bid'āt* (innovations) of this era will not be removed without Imām Mahdī ﷺ."

51. "It is not harmful for a *dhākir* (one engaged in *dhikr*) to eat meat. However, if he eats meat more than twice a week, it will harden his heart."



I do not intend incorporating everything related to this chapter. I merely wanted to present a few examples of his *irshādāt* to the reader. I shall now quote fifteen *irshādāt* from Hadrat Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib Karsauwī's collection as a source of blessings (*tabarrukan*), and thereby I conclude this chapter.

The late Maulānā was a *mujāz tarīqah khalīfah* of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. May Allāh ﷻ shower abundant Mercy upon him. Three years have passed since his demise in Makkah Mu'azzamah. [He passed away] due to diarrhoea and fever. The Maulānā had gathered a large collection of Hadrat's *irshādāt*. If Allāh ﷻ gives us the inspiration, we will present them to the reader at some time in the future. The Maulānā recorded all the *irshādāt* in Persian and I do not consider it appropriate to make any changes to them. Therefore I shall quote them verbatim:

1. It has been famously mentioned that Nabī Ibrāhīm ﷺ had made the *Mi'hjan* (clay pot) which is close to the door of the

Ka'bah. This is incorrect. Similarly, the yellow stone which has been placed in it is merely for decoration. The famous comment that it is beneficial for [the treatment of] jaundice is untrue.

2. A space of only six feet from the *Haṭīm* was [originally] part of the *Baytullāh* [Ka'bah]. The rest of the *Haṭīm* was the place where the sheep of Hadrat Hajīrah ﷺ was kept.
3. It has been established that there were six places in the Haram Sharīf in which Nabī ﷺ used to perform his *ṣalāh*:
 - (1) In the Ka'bah, between the two pillars.
 - (2) When exiting the Ka'bah, in front of the door.
 - (3) Behind the *Maqām-e-Ibrahīm*.
 - (4) Beneath the *Mīzāb-e-Rahmah*.
 - (5) Next to Rukn-ul Yamānī, towards the *Hajar-ul Aswad*.
 - (6) Next to the pillar by the *Matāf*, in line with the *Hajar-ul Aswad*.
4. There are two types of knowledge:
 - (1) Knowledge of inspiration (*mukāshafah*).
 - (2) Knowledge of dealings (*mu'āmalah*).

The meaning of 'knowledge of inspiration' (*mukāshafah*) is to follow the laws of Allāh ﷻ. Through this, 'knowledge of conviction' (*'ilm-ul Yaqīn*) and 'knowledge of witness' (*'ilm-ul Mushāhadah*) will be attained. Otherwise, miracles and inspiration (without practice) are worthless.

5. The supernatural doings (*karāmāt*) and beneficial effect (*taṣarrufāt*) of the friends of Allāh ﷻ and their teachings remain even after their demise. In fact, it increases after their demise as Hafīz Abdul Barr mentions a Hadīth that proves this.

6. Whatever Hadrat has said in no.5 is correct.
7. Through the inspirations (*kashf*) of the friends of Allāh ﷺ their perfections (*kamālāt*) are revealed.
8. One should not criticize or insult the friends of Allāh ﷺ. As far as possible, one should find an excusable interpretation for their sayings. If this is not possible, then discreetly enquire the reasons for what they have said.
9. Regarding matters of *dhikr* and daily practices, some of the practices which have been passed on from the pious predecessors to the latter pious '*ulamā*' have been changed through the inspiration of Allāh ﷻ [Divine Inspiration. These changes were made] in order to renew (*tajdīd*) or change (*tabdīl*) its methodology. Thus, after this new methodology [was put into practice], the benefit of the previous methods ended. If any benefit remained [after these new methods were implemented], it would only be minimal. This is like *mansūkh* (abrogation) which has been mentioned in the Qur'ān.
10. The Sahābah ﷺ possessed the quality of *nisbat Samadīyya* which means that they did not regard any personal achievement as being a product of their own doing nor did they attribute it to themselves. Rather, they regarded Allāh ﷻ as the Controller and Cause of their actions. For this reason they would sacrifice all their wealth in the Path of Allah without any hesitation.

Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib would always be conscious of the All-Hearing, All-Seeing qualities of Allāh ﷻ. Such a condition would result, that if he were to see a mountain in front of him, he would start crying and say: "This is the Power of Allāh ﷻ over everything." He would be the same in all his

dealings.

11. When your eyes open at night, do not sleep again, for it will be difficult for you to wake up at the appropriate time.
12. Without being strict in opposing your *nafs* (carnal desires), no one can be reformed and corrected.
13. A Divine Light (*Nūr*) is created when consuming *halāl*, while a type of darkness is created by consuming *harām*. By eating a lot, one becomes unmindful. By eating a little, one remains healthy and fit and is able to work punctually. By eating less one does not feel lethargic, while by eating a lot, the brain becomes heavy and it causes one to feel sleepy.
14. The nisbat of the *Sahābah* ﷺ was *wajdānī* (acquired). If it was *kashfī* (Divinely Inspired), they would not have been able to perform all the mundane duties, such as *Jihād*, etc. Not a single atom can move without the permission of Allāh ﷻ. Everything is from Allāh ﷻ Alone. Without the Will and Command of Allāh ﷻ, nothing can exist nor can it come into existence.
15.

سمعت شيخى سيدنا مولانا جنجوهي يقول سمعت الشاه احمد سعيد
يقول سمعت الشاه محمد إسحاق يقول سمعت الشاه أهل الله يقول
سمعت الجن يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول مَنْ
تَزَيَّا بِغَيْرِ زَيٍّ فَقُتِلَ قَدْمُهُ هَدِيرٌ الْحَدِيثُ، وبالفاظ أخرى مَنْ قُتِلَ فِي
غَيْرِ زَيٍّ قَدْمُهُ هَدِيرٌ الْحَدِيثُ. وفي الحديث قصة وهي هذه:

Translation: "I heard my Shaykh, Sayyidunā Maulānā Gangohī say: I heard Shāh Ahmād Sa'īd say: I heard Shāh Muḥammad Is-ḥāq say, I heard Shāh Ahlullāh saying, I heard the jinnī say: I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say: 'The person

who adopts a form [or appearance] different from his own form and is killed, then he has shed his blood in vain.' This Hadīth is quoted in a different way as well: *'The person who is killed while he has adopted a different form [or appearance], he has shed his blood in vain.'*

There is a story which is related to this Hadīth:

Shāh Aḥlullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was sitting in a Musjid – reciting the Qur'ān, when a small snake passed by. He took a [pair of] shears, or some other object, and cut it into two. A short while later, two messengers came to him and said: "The king is calling you." Shāh Sāhib accompanied them and they escorted him out of the town towards the jungle. Shāh Sāhib became worried and asked: "Where is the king?" They replied: "He is near here." Shāh Sāhib thought to himself that the king must have come out here to hunt and needed to find out [regarding] a ruling (*mas'ala*), and that that is why he summoned him there. Thus, he continued walking without any concern until they came to a door in the ground through which he had to enter. Upon entering it, he saw a royal court in attendance. An old man was sitting on a throne, his attendants were sitting in a circle, and a court case was in progress.

Shāh Sāhib offered *salām* and sat down to one side. This was the court of a jinnī king. A short while later, the king looked towards Shāh Sāhib and a plaintiff was summoned. He claimed that Shāh Sāhib had killed his son without any justification and – as per the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ – he had to be given the right of retribution. Shāh Sāhib was astounded by this claim and expressed his total ignorance of any murder or killing.

However, he was informed that the small snake, which he had chopped in half while he was reciting the Qur'ān, was

the claimant's son. Since Shāh Sāhib had killed his son without any justification, he was demanding retribution. Shāh Sāhib admitted what he had done and remained silent. To cut a long story short – since he was guilty, the verdict for his death in retribution was about to be passed.

There was an elderly person present in the royal court. He had accepted Rasūlullāh ﷺ as a Prophet, and had the opportunity of meeting him. He thus had the honour of being a jinnī Sahābī. He said: "Retribution is not *wājib* upon Shāh Sāhib because I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say: 'The person who is killed while he has adopted a different form [or appearance], he has shed his blood in vain.'

This Hadīth would mean: The jinn child appeared in the form of a small snake. The person who killed it, thinking it to be a snake, could not be held accountable. Consequently, the royal decree was passed, Shāh Sāhib was released and honourably escorted back to his place [of residence]. While there, Shāh Sāhib shook hands and embraced the jinnī Sahābī, and obtained formal permission from him to relate this Hadīth. Based upon this contact which he had with the jinnī Sahābī, Shāh Sāhib may be enumerated amongst the Tābi'īn. This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows upon whomever He Wills."

STORIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

أَحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ – لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُنِي صِلَاخًا

*"I love the righteous although I am not of them.
Perhaps Allāh will bestow me with righteousness
[by virtue of my love for them]."*

We relate a few stories of the *Auliya'* of Allāh ﷻ which we had

heard from Hadrat Imām Rabbānī during the course of instruction and tutoring:

1. Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus *rahimahullāh* used to engage in loud *dhikr* from 'ishā until fajr. He had become extremely engrossed in this.⁴¹ Whenever his son would enter, the Shaykh would ask him his name. He would say his name, but before he could say anything else, the Shaykh would become engrossed in *dhikr* once again. This question and answer would occur countless times before they would finally get a chance to speak.

2. Regardless of how pious a person may be, regardless of how much *kashf* and *karāmāt* he displays, and regardless of how much influence he may wield over people's hearts – if there is *ghurūr* (conceit) in him, you must conclude that he knows nothing.

Hadrat then related this story:

Once, four people went to visit Bāyazīd Bustāmī. When they reached the *khānqāh* entrance, they decided amongst themselves that one person will remain outside to guard their goods, while the other three will go inside to meet the Shaykh. When these three return, the fourth person will go inside. They all agreed on this plan, but they differed regarding who should remain outside. Each one passed the responsibility onto the other.

After having argued for quite some time, one of them said: "Very well, you may all go [inside] to visit. I will remain with the goods because I am a big sinner. I am not even worthy of visiting Hadrat." He remained seated while the other three proceeded to visit the Shaykh.

⁴¹ Hadrat Shaykh ['Abd al-Quddūs] *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I had trained my heart with loud *dhikr* from the beginning. So now, it does not give the chance for anything else."

The moment they entered, the Shaykh scolded them and drove them away, saying: "Go away from here. The only worthy person amongst you has not come." The three went back and said to their companion: "Come with us, because we were scolded and driven away for leaving you here." When he joined them, all four of them were given an audience.

Hadrat commented: "Hadrat Bāyazīd *rahimahullāh* probably scolded them after receiving *kashf*."

3. Our *murshid*, Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* once came to Gangoh. A person from Rāmpūr said: "Hadrat, I have lost my horse. Make *du'ā*' that I find it." Hadrat had the *Mathnawī* in his hand at the time. When he opened it, his eyes fell upon this poem:

*If a deceiving enemy steals your goods,
then you must know ...
an enemy will never return his enemy's goods.*

4. Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* once received a request from Shāhābād, district Ambālah, to transfer the property which was near the lake onto his name. Hadrat sent the following reply: "*What need does the pious saint have for the creation?*"

5. Shāh Abū Sa'īd Gangohī *rahimahullāh* [the grandson of Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*] once went to Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Balkhī *rahimahullāh* in Balkh, with the intention of pledging *bay'ah* to him. When Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* was informed that Shāh Abū Sa'īd Gangohī *rahimahullāh* would be arriving soon, he left town and went to a station [stopping point] to welcome him.

Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Balkhī *rahimahullāh* then transported him to Balkh, and treated him with great hospitality and honour. Upon reaching Balkh, he showered him with attention and had delicious

meals prepared for him daily. He seated him in his own place, while he, himself, sat amongst his *khādims*. When Shāh Abū Sa'īd eventually sought permission to return home, Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn presented many gold coins to him as a gift. Thereupon Shāh Abū Sa'īd said: "Hadrat, I have no need for this worldly treasure, nor did I come here for this purpose. I want the [spiritual] treasure which you had taken from our place [Gangoh]."

The moment Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn heard this, the colour of his eyes changed. In a reprimanding tone he said to him: "Go into the stable, remain there and tend to the dogs." Shāh Abū Sa'īd went to the stable where the hunting dogs were placed in his care. He had to groom them daily and keep them in a clean condition. The Shaykh would occasionally mount his horse to go hunting and Shāh Abū Sa'īd would accompany him on foot with the dogs in chains.

The Shaykh instructed his *khādims* to give two barley breads to him twice a day. On one occasion, Shāh Abū Sa'īd presented himself before the Shaykh, but the Shaykh did not pay any attention to him. He ordered him to sit at a distance – like the rest of the attendants. He would not bother to see who arrived and where the person was sitting.

After three or four months, the Shaykh told the toilet cleaner: "When you collect all the animal dung from the stable and carry it away, you must pass by that mad-man [referring to Shāh Abū Sa'īd] who remains seated in the stable." The toilet cleaner [obeyed his order and] walked past him with the bucket of dung. Some of it spilt and fell onto Shāh Abū Sa'īd. His face turned red with anger. He raised his eyebrows and said: "You are lucky you are not in Gangoh, otherwise I would have taught you a lesson. I am an outsider here, you are the Shaykh's servant, and therefore I cannot do anything to you." The cleaner related the incident to the Shaykh who said: "Yes! The stench of pride is still in him."

For two months the Shaykh did not test him. Then he called the toilet cleaner again and instructed him to do the same thing – only this time he should purposefully spill some dung on him and see how he responds. The toilet cleaner carried out the Shaykh's orders, but Shāh Abū Sa'īd did not utter a word. He just stared at him angrily, lowered his head, and remained silent. When the incident was related to the Shaykh, he said: "He still has a feeling of pride."

Three to four months later, the Shaykh instructed the toilet cleaner thus: "You must deliberately pour the entire bucket of dung onto him so that he is soaked from head to toe with the dung." The toilet cleaner carried out his orders, but by then, Shāh Abū Sa'īd had become what he had gone for. [He had rid himself of all his pride.] In fact, this time he was concerned about the toilet cleaner and said: "You tripped over me and fell. Did you get hurt?" Saying this, he started to collect all the dung which had spilled, and he filled the bucket again. The toilet cleaner returned to the Shaykh and said: "Instead of the Miyājī becoming angry at me today, he felt sorry for me. He picked up the dung and put it back into the bucket." The Shaykh said: "Enough! We have achieved our objective."

That same day, the Shaykh sent a message to him. He told him that he intended to go hunting that evening and that he should prepare the dogs and be ready to accompany him. The Shaykh mounted his horse and, together with a group of his *khādims*, he proceeded towards the forest.

Shāh Abū Sa'īd was holding onto the chains in an effort to control the dogs. The dogs were powerful hunting dogs who were used to devouring their prey. However, by now Shāh Abū Sa'īd had become weak and emaciated and he could not really control the dogs. He drew the chains back in an effort to restrain them, but they went beyond his control. Eventually he tied the chain around his waist. When the dogs caught sight of their prey, they dashed towards it. Poor Shāh Abū Sa'īd fell to the ground and the dogs ran

ahead – dragging him behind them. His body struck rocks and was dragged over pebbles. His entire body was covered in bruises and blood, but he did not utter a single word of complaint. When another *khādim* restrained the dogs and picked him up, he started to tremble. He feared that Hadrat would be angry with him because he could not control the dogs and because he did not manage to restrain them. His first words were: “Hadrat is not angry with me, is he?”

The Shaykh was actually testing him, and he had passed the test. That night the Shaykh [Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Balkhī rahimahullāh] saw his Shaykh, Quṭb al-‘Ālam Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs in a dream. Grieved, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs said to him: “Nizām ad-Dīn! I did not put you through such a stringent test as you are now subjecting my child to!” The very next morning, Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn called for Shāh Abū Sa‘īd from the stable, hugged him to his chest and said: “I had brought the bestowal of the Chishtīyyah lineage from India to this place [in Balkh]. Now you are the sole person who will take this bestowal from me, and return it to India. Congratulations to you. You may [now] return to your hometown.” The Shaykh appointed him as his *khalīfah* and sent him back to India.

6. There was a *majdhūb* Punjābī who used to live at the place where Hadrat Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad Sāhib rahimahullāh used to stay over whenever he would go to Lauhārī. Coincidentally, Hadrat Hājī ‘Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Wilāyatī Shahīd rahimahullāh also used to stay over at this place. Very often, the *majdhūb* used to tell Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd’s khādims: “O, your Hājī is a great *buzurg*.”

Once Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd rahimahullāh was travelling to Arabia to visit the Haramayn Sharīfayn. While he was on board the ship, his water jug slipped from his hand and fell into the ocean. A few moments later, a hand appeared from the ocean – holding the water jug. The hand placed the water jug in Hadrat Hājī Sāhib’s hand and disappeared. At the time when this happened, the *majdhūb* – who was in Lauhārī – told Hadrat’s khādims: “Your

Hājī's water jug fell into the ocean. I returned it to him." The *khādims* thought he was merely prattling.

When Hadrat Hājī Sāhib returned after performing hajj and visited Lauhārī, someone remembered what the *majdhūb* had said and related it to Hadrat. He said: "It is true. This incident certainly took place while I was on board the ship, but at the time I did not recognize whose hand it was."

7. During my student days, while I was living in Delhi, there was a *majdhūb* by the name of Hāfiz 'Abd al-Qādir rahimahullāh who used to stay over at Dār al-Baqā. He was walking on the road one day, and I was only a few steps behind him. Suddenly he turned around, looked at me, and asked: "Who is it? Is it Qudratullāh?" I replied: "Hadrat, it is me – Rashīd Ahmad." He turned around, walked a few steps back, and said: "Move away, move away, move away!" He pointed towards his chest and said: "The bullet struck me here! The bullet struck me here!" After saying these few words, he fled. About a month later the turmoil of the Indian mutiny commenced. He was martyred when a bullet struck him in his chest.

Hadrat then added: Once Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī] was walking with the *Bukhārī Sharīf* in his hand when he met up with this same *majdhūb* Hāfiz Sāhib along the road. He grabbed the *Bukhārī Sharīf* from Maulwī Sāhib's hand and walked away. The Maulwī Sāhib became scared and followed him, fearing that he might throw the *Bukhārī Sharīf* down somewhere.

There was a *bharbhūnjā* (a person who dries out grain) who had a shop along the way. He went and sat at the entrance of this shop, started flipping through the pages of the *Bukhārī Sharīf*, while saying: "مِنْ مِنْ مِنْ – from, from, from." He continued flipping through the pages for quite some time and then handed the book over to the Maulwī Sāhib.

8. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muḥaddith Dehlawī, Maulānā Fakhr ad-Dīn Sāhib Chishtī, and Hadrat Mirzā Jān Jānān *rahmatullāhi 'alayhim ajma'in* were contemporaries and all three used to stay over in Delhi. A person once saw that all three of them coincidentally happened to be in Delhi at the same time. He felt that it was an ideal opportunity to test them in order to see who enjoys the highest rank.

First he went to Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and said: "Hadrat, I am here to invite you to a meal tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. You must come to my house by yourself. Do not wait for me to call you." Shāh Sāhib replied: "Very well." The person then went to Maulānā Fakhr ad-Dīn Sāhib and said: "You must come to my house tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. Do not wait for me to call you. Come and join me in whatever food I have." He then left, proceeded to Mirzā Jān Jānān and said: "I will be occupied with my business, so I will not be able to fetch you tomorrow. You must come to my house at 10:00 a.m."

All three accepted his invitation and arrived at his house the following day at the exact time which he had stipulated. At 9:00 a.m., Shāh Sāhib was the first to arrive. The person seated him in a room and departed. Maulānā [Fakhr ad-Dīn] arrived at 9:30 a.m., and the man seated him in another room. Mirzā Sāhib arrived at his house at 10:00 a.m., and the man seated him in another room. The three personalities were thus seated in three separate rooms without any one of them knowing about the other's presence.

When all three of them were seated, he brought them water to wash their hands, and said: "I am coming with the food just now". Thereupon he left. Several hours passed without the person checking on his guests. He did not even bother to see who was still present and who had left.

When the time of *zuhr salāh* approached, he thought to himself that

his guests would also have to perform their salāh. He went to Shāh Sāhib, faked an embarrassed face and said: "Hadrat, what can I say? I had some problems at home and could not make arrangements for the meal." The man gave Shāh Sāhib two rupees and said: "Please accept this money from me." Shāh Sāhib accepted the money gladly and said: "Bhāi, there is nothing to worry about. Such problems often occur in our houses. There is no need for you to feel embarrassed." Upon saying this, Shāh Sāhib departed.

He then went to Maulānā Fakhr ad-Dīn Sāhib, said the same thing to him, and gave him two rupees. The Maulānā said to him: "Bhāi, there is nothing to worry about. Such problems often occur in our houses." He stood up, spread out his scarf with absolute humility and respect, accepted the gift of two rupees, tied the money in his scarf and departed.

After giving leave to these two elders, he proceeded to Hadrat Mirzā Jān Jānān *rahimahullāh*. He offered the same excuse and presented him with two rupees. Mirzā Sāhib accepted the money, placed it in his pocket, lowered his head and said: "It is okay, but do not impose on me like this again." Saying this, he departed.

The person related this story to some other pious personalities who remarked: "Maulānā Shāh Fakhr ad-Dīn Sāhib has surpassed all of them in the field of Sufism because he humbled himself, stood up with respect and accepted the gift. Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib is lower in rank than him, because he gladly accepted the gift. Mirzā Sāhib is in third position because, together with accepting the gift, he expressed his displeasure."

After relating this story, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "This was the opinion of the *buzurghs* of that time. However, I am of the opinion that Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib's rank surpassed the others, because he exercised great patience and forbearance – despite having an extremely sensitive temperament – and merely said: 'It is okay.'"

9. Hadrat used to relate many stories regarding Mirzā Jān Jānān's sensitive temperament and fastidiousness. One day he related: A person once invited Mirzā Sāhib to his house. Because he was aware of his meticulous nature, he really cleaned his house [thoroughly], swept it and white-washed it. Once he had it sparkling clean and beautiful, he called Mirzā Sāhib. Mirzā Sāhib arrived and sat down to one side [with his head lowered]. When the food was presented before him, he raised his head, then lowered it into his hands and said: "Miyā! Why is that stone jutting out from the ground? I will not [be able to eat] until it is removed." The person removed the stone immediately and levelled the ground. Only then did Mirzā Sāhib commence eating.

10. Mirzā Sāhib's would develop a headache whenever he saw things which had been placed incorrectly. After much persistence and imploring, [the king] Bahādur Shāh, received permission to visit him. It was the summer season. The king was feeling thirsty and asked him for water. Hadrat said: "There is the waterpot. Pour water into a cup and drink it." The king drank the water and placed the cup on top of the waterpot. When Mirzā Sāhib's gaze fell on the waterpot, he noticed that the cup had been placed slightly skew. He continued staring at it with narrowed eyes, until he could no longer control himself. He said: "Janāb! I do not know how you are running your kingdom when you have not even learnt how to serve. Look at that waterpot. Is this how a cup is placed?" Mirzā Sāhib then said in a stern tone: "Do not cause me such discomfort in future."

11. One night, Mirzā Sāhib slept very little because of the cold. When an elderly female attendant came to know about this, she came to him and said: "If you will permit me, I will have a duvet sewn for you." Hadrat replied: "Very well."

After the '*ishā salāh*', the old woman arrived with the duvet and said: "Hadrat, here is the duvet." Hadrat was already lying down on

his bed [at that time]. He said: "Mā'ī (a term of respect for an elderly woman), I am already lying down and it is difficult for me to get up now. You should rather come and spread it over me." The old woman spread it over him and left.

The following morning Mirzā Sāhib said to his *khādim*: "Ghulām 'Alī! I could not sleep the entire night. Check if there are any lice in that duvet." Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib checked it thoroughly. It was a new duvet. How could there be any lice in it? He realized that, in the rush to make the duvet, a few stitches had been sewn crooked. He straightened the stitches and checked it with a pair of compasses. Only then was Mirzā Sāhib able to get some sleep.

12. On one occasion Hadrat related: Shāh Ghulām 'Alī was a special *khādim* of Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib. Whenever he would stand up to fan Hadrat, he would be extremely cautious. Despite this, whenever the fan moved slightly slower than normal, Hadrat would ask: "Miyā, is there no strength in your hands?" If he went slightly faster than normal, Hadrat would say: "You will blow me away!"

One day, in a subdued tone, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib eventually [plucked up the courage and] said to him: "Hadrat, neither is this way [slow] okay, nor is that way [fast]." Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib became angry and scolded him, saying: "Stop fanning me!" Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib cried in front of him, asked him forgiveness, and sought permission to continue fanning him. Hadrat then granted him permission.

13. Once the Qādī Sāhib was wearing elegant clothes when he went to visit Hadrat. The son of a Shaykh, accompanied the Qādī Sāhib on this particular occasion. When the Shaykh Sāhib felt thirsty, Mirzā Sāhib gave him permission to drink water from the waterpot. He drank the water and covered the glass. [Upon seeing this], Mirzā Sāhib expressed his disapproval, got up, and straightened the glass over the waterpot. Coincidentally, the Shaykh Sāhib's pants were

loose on the one side because the drawstring had moved to one side. When Mirzā Sāhib's gaze fell on this scene, he became agitated and said to the Qādī Sāhib: "How can you get along with this Shaykh Sāhib when he does not even know how to wear a [pair of] pants properly? Both his buttocks are in one side of the pants."

14. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib would clean the floor before it was time for Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib to emerge from his room. When he emerged from his room one day, he held his face in his hands and sat down [showing his disapproval]. Then he said: "Ghulām 'Alī, you still haven't learnt any etiquette. Look at that blade of grass lying on the floor. Pick it up quickly."

15. A person once went to great pains and attention to prepare *lauz* (a kind of sweetmeat made with almonds), and placed it in front of Mirzā Sāhib. He did not say anything about it. The following day the person asked him: "Hadrat, did you like the *lauz*?" He remained silent. He repeated the question but Mirzā Sāhib just remained silent. The person asked the same question a third time. Mirzā Sāhib could not control himself any longer and said: "Was that *lauz* or the soles of a shoe?" He raised three or four fingers and asked: "Have you ever seen such a large [piece of] *lauz*? You prepared such unique *lauz* and then, to make matters worse, you still want to be praised for it! Miyā, *lauz* refers to almonds. It [the *lauz*] must be made the size of almonds [and not so large]. When a person eats, he must be able to place one or two in his mouth [at a time]."

Someone also else made some *lauz* and presented it to Mirzā Sāhib. Hadrat liked the way it was prepared. He called Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib and gave him a few. Shāh Sāhib extended both his hands to receive the *lauz*. Mirzā Sāhib expressed much agitation and said: "Miyā, bring some paper and place it on the paper." Shāh Sāhib rushed to bring the paper. Mirzā Sāhib then placed the *lauz* onto it and Shāh Sāhib wrapped the *lauz* in the paper. Again Mirzā Sāhib became agitated, held his head and said: "Ghulām 'Alī! You will

kill me. You do not even know how to wrap an item! Is this how you wrap *lauz*?"

Mirzā Sāhib took everything from him and wrapped the *lauz*—ensuring that all the corners of the paper were neat. He folded it methodically and handed it over to Shāh Sāhib. The next day Mirzā Sāhib asked him: "Ghulām 'Alī, did you eat the *lauz*?" He replied: "Yes, Hadrat. They were very tasty." He asked: "How many did you eat?" Shāh Sāhib replied: "Hadrat, I ate them all." Upon hearing this Mirzā Sāhib became agitated and asked in astonishment: "Are you a human or an animal?"

16. Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib's incredible perfectionism and sensitive temperament was a great test for him, and he had to strive through it. There was a very grumpy, ill-mannered and abusive woman. He received *ilhām* (inspiration): "If you marry this woman and are able to exercise patience over her foul mouth and grumpiness, you will be honoured." Hadrat immediately sent a proposal and married her. The woman's grumpiness, bad manners, hard-heartedness, and foul mouth were beyond description. Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib would enter his house happily and she would immediately start hurling abuses at him. He would sit down quietly and listen to all her obscenities without uttering a single word. He would swallow whatever she said and leave.

It was his daily practice to send his *khādim* first thing in the morning to stand at her door, convey *salām* and ask her if she needed any task to be carried out. To carry out Hadrat's orders, the *khādim* would present himself at her door, convey the Shaykh's *salām* and inquire about her. Instead of replying to the *salām*, she would utter obscenities and use such vulgar words that would embarrass anyone who was listening. However, Mirzā Sāhib had clearly emphasized that the *khādim* was not to say anything disrespectful to his wife. He should not respond at all. He should merely listen to whatever she says.

One day, a foreign *khādim* was ordered to carry out this task. Although it had been emphasized that he should not say anything, the poor fellow could not restrain himself. He went to her door, conveyed Hadrat's *salām* and inquired about her. The woman started hurling abuses and said: "What does he think? Does he think he is a very great Shaykh? Do this like this, and do this like that!" She continued along this vein. The foreigner did his utmost to restrain himself, but for how long could he bear hearing these things about his Shaykh? He went into a rage and said: "Enough! Remain silent or I will kill you." The woman went into an even greater rage and started directing her obscenities at the foreigner. When this torrent of words reached his ears, Mirzā Sāhib became concerned. He quickly summoned the foreigner, sat him down and said: "You do not know how to handle this." Hadrat sent another *khādim*, who listened to her abuses and returned.

Hadrat Mirzā Sāhib used to say this very often: "I am extremely grateful and indebted to that woman. I benefited tremendously through her." In reality, through bearing the hardships and difficulties which she imposed upon him, his character and mannerisms became exceptionally refined, and all the anger and irritability which he had, disappeared.

17. One can gauge Mirzā Sāhib's sensitive temperament from the following: There was a person who used to eat a lot and people had given him the nickname '*Akkūl*' (one who eats a lot). Whenever he would visit Mirzā Sāhib, Hadrat would look at him, think of how much food he was eating, and develop a headache by just thinking about it. He would have to hold his head for a long time thereafter. If any stone jutted out of the ground, or the mat appeared uneven and his gaze happened to fall on this, he would become restless and agitated.

18. A person once prepared *lauz* and sent it to Mirzā Sāhib. According to this person, the *lauz* was obviously presented in a

very appealing fashion, but when Mirzā Sāhib looked at the *lauz*, he said: "What kind of *lauz* is this? They look like horse shoes!"

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī added: "Mirzā Sāhib did not like to accept anyone's *khidmat* (service) or gifts. This was done for the rectification of the *ṭālibīn* (seekers). This is why Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib's character was thoroughly reformed and rectified."

Then Hadrat told us: "Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib was exceptionally humble and subdued. A *sayyid* [a person from the progeny of Hadrat 'Alī and Fātimah *radiyallāhu 'anhā*] came to him one day and said: "Hadrat, appoint me as your *khādim*." Shocked, Shāh Sāhib got up and said: "Hold on, hold on. Don't ever utter such words. You are from the progeny of [Hadrat] 'Alī, and I am Ghulām 'Alī (the servant of 'Alī)."

19. My father, Maulwī Hidāyat Ahmad Sāhib Marhūm, used to remain in Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib's service. Shāh Sāhib started showering him with tremendous affection, and his foreign *khādims* became very jealous of this. They conspired to poison my father. When my father learnt of this, he took leave from Hadrat and returned to Gangoh.

20. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd, together with two other people, once went to Amrauhah to see Shāh 'Abd al-Hādī Sāhib with the intention of pledging *bay'ah*. For three days Hadrat hosted them in the Musjid. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib did not pay any particular attention to them. He would enter the Musjid for *ṣalāh*, perform his *ṣalāh*, and return to his room. After three days had passed in this way, the two companions said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd: "Miyā, this person seems to be very wealthy. He is paying no attention whatsoever to us. What will we gain by becoming his *murīds*? Come, let us go somewhere else where there is poverty and asceticism."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib replied: "Bhāi, you may go if you wish, but I am not leaving this place." The two eventually left. When Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd appeared before Shāh Sāhib, he scowled at him, scolded him and threatened him, saying: "Why are you just lying here? Why are you not going away from here?" Hājī Sāhib replied: "Hadrat, initiate me into your *silsilah* of *khādims*." Shāh Sāhib replied in a harsh tone: "I am a wealthy person. I eat betel-leaves and betel-nuts. I am neither worthy of [being taken] *bay'ah* [to], nor am I accepting your *bay'ah*. Go! Look in some other place."

Hājī Sāhib lowered his head and said: "Hadrat, please accept my *bay'ah*." After a few days had passed, Hadrat felt convinced that he would not leave without *bay'ah*. When it was the time between *zuhr* and '*asr*', he took Hājī Sāhib with him and they walked towards the river. He accepted his *bay'ah* on the river bank.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was suddenly overcome with laughter and started laughing uncontrollably. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib also started laughing in the same way. When it was the time for '*asr*', Shāh Sāhib got up to lead the *ṣalāh* and Hājī Sāhib was his *muqtaḍī* (follower in *ṣalāh*). But, the two were so overcome with laughter that they could not commence the *ṣalāh*. They stood up several times to start their *ṣalāh* but they just could not manage. When only a short time remained in which they could perform their *ṣalāh*, they forced themselves and performed it.

A few days later, Hājī Sāhib took leave from Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, went somewhere, and became engrossed in Allāh's remembrance. Six months later he came to Amrauhah to visit Shāh Sāhib and learnt that he had passed away. His Shaykh passed away before he could receive *khilāfat*.

At the first opportunity, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd went to Panchlāsah and pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of Shāh Raḥam 'Alī Sāhib rahimahullāh. Shāh Sāhib showed great attention towards

him and said to him: "Here, take this *laddū* (a sweetmeat), go and sit on the *kālā ām* (black mango) mountain, and do your work [of *dhikr*] there." As per his Shaykh's instruction, he remained there for six months, engrossed himself in Allāh's remembrance, and sustained himself by eating the leaves of the trees. Six months later he returned to Panchlāsah with the *laddū*, but before his return, Shāh Sāhib had passed away, and he did not receive *khilāfat* from him either.

When Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Barelwī *rahimahullāh* visited Sahāranpūr, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib went to him and said: "Give me *ijāzah* (*khilāfat*). I have already engaged in the *dhikr shughl* of the Qādirīyyah and Chishtīyyah elders." Sayyid Sāhib said: "I cannot give you *ijāzah* until you pledge *bay'ah* to me." He pledged *bay'ah* to him and [immediately] received *ijāzah* from him.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd used to relate: "Sayyid Sāhib possessed intense light of the Sharī'ah." Whenever the two of them would go into *murāqabah* (meditation), Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd would laugh, while Sayyid Sāhib would remain silent.

21. Hadrat said: "The pond at the *khānqāh* in Panchlāsah was personally dug by Hadrat Hājī Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*." Pīr Jīyo Muḥammad Ja'far Sāhib Sādhaurwī said: "Hadrat, previously water used to remain in that pond throughout the year. All the other ponds would dry up, but not that pond. I never saw it dry. But, about ten to twelve years ago, the villagers cleaned the pond, removed the soil, and made it deeper. Ever since that time, it has never been the same as it was before. We see it raining profusely, but the pond becomes dry. Within a month after the rains, there is no water left in the pond." Hadrat replied: "Yes, the quality which was found in that pond is no longer there."

22. Once Hadrat said: "The *jubbah* (cloak) which has been preserved by Sajjādah Sāhib, was worn for fifty years by Hadrat

Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs. Some people said to Hadrat Shaykh: "This Sufism is not confined to wearing old clothes. Why are you continually patching this *jubbah*. Why don't you get a new one?" Hadrat replied: "By Allāh, I do not have any *halāl* earning with which I can purchase a new garment, and which I could wear and remove." His *khādims* – Hadrat Jalāl Thānesarī and others – [went out and] did some menial labour, collected twenty-four coins and purchased fabric with it. [From this fabric], one pair of pants and one *kurtah* was sewn and the Shaykh wore it. When it became old, he started to patch it repeatedly. He did not have any garment tailored after that."

23. In one of his works, Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* wrote: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, there is a *buzurg* in my era. I don't think there was anyone from amongst the past *buzurgs* who is striving like him. For the past forty years he has been eating only one almond per day. He lives his life in this way and does not eat anything else of this world."

24. Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* spent his entire life in poverty. His son used to scream and cry due to hunger. The child's mother would place an empty pot over the fire to divert his attention. If the child demanded food, she would console and comfort him, saying: "See, something is cooking on the fire. Why are you worried? You must eat when your father arrives." He would go crying to his father, and demand that he should rush home to feed him. Hadrat would accompany him to the house and seat himself. Tears would well in his eyes and he would say: "Because of my sins, these poor innocent children have to suffer." This would happen several times per day.

25. Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* would sit after the '*ishā salāh* to engage in loud *dhikr*, and would continue until the morning. If a person's *dhikr* lasts so long, what can be said about the extent of his condition?

26. Once a discussion revolved around the wastage and extravagance of the rulers with regard to the funds of the *Bayt al-Māl* (the Islamic treasury). Hadrat said: "Hārūn Rashīd was an 'ālim and a student of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*. When he ascended the throne [as caliph], he spent a lot of money on the 'ulamā' and *sulahā'* (righteous servants). Hadrat Sufyān *rahimahullāh* did not go to see him. Then Hārūn Rashīd sent a note to him, stating: 'I spent a lot of gold on the 'ulamā' and *sulahā'*. Why did Hadrat not come? Had Hadrat borne the inconvenience of coming, it would have been a source of honour for me.'

A messenger took the royal note to Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* who was busy teaching at the time. The moment he set eyes on the messenger, he said: 'May Allāh destine something good. The transgressor's messenger has arrived.' The messenger then presented the note to him. Hadrat held it with a cloth, passed it to one of his students and asked him to read it out to him, saying: 'I do not want to touch the transgressor's letter.'

The student read out the letter to him whereupon he remarked: 'I do not even want to give any paper to the tyrant. Write my reply on the reverse side of his letter. Write the following: 'I have received information about your transgression and excesses. You have acknowledged your excesses through this letter and made me witness to it as well. Now remember, on the Day of Resurrection I will bear testimony of your transgression. You will have to suffer the punishment for it. What right do you have to steal from the Bayt al-Māl?'

The scribe wrote the reply, handed the paper over to the messenger, and asked him to take it [to Hārūn Rashīd]. Hadrat Sufyān's words had a great impact on the messenger and he said: 'Permit me to remain in your service.' Hadrat replied: 'We cannot hold back a messenger. First go and convey my reply. After that, if your heart still wants to and you still have the desire, you may return to me.'

The messenger left, went into the marketplace and announced: 'Is there anyone who is prepared to give me his old and tattered clothes in return for this suit which I am wearing?' He exchanged his expensive set of clothes which was worth two hundred rupees, for old and tattered clothes which was worth only two rupees. He then gave the letter to the person [who exchanged the clothes with him] and asked him to convey it to Hārūn Rashīd. Therafter he went to Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*.

When Hārūn Rashīd read the letter, he burst out crying and said: 'The one who received the original letter [Sufyān Thaurī] has triumphed, and the one who had sent it [referring to himself] has failed.' He then ordered his attendants to always have this letter placed before him whenever he sits on the throne."

27. Hadrat Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī *rahimahullāh* pledged *bay'ah* at the hands of his Shaykh and became engrossed in *dhikr wa shughl*. Within twenty days, his Shaykh started showing affection towards him, and accorded much respect to him. Whenever Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn paid a visit to his Shaykh, he would seat him in a distinguished place, and converse with him with extreme affection and attention.

Some of the Shaykh's *khādims* became jealous of this and disapproved of the respect which was accorded to him. They thought to themselves: "We have been here in Hadrat's service for fifteen to twenty years yet we are deprived of such honour, whereas this person just arrived yesterday, but he is being showered with so much affection!"

The Shaykh got wind of their whisperings. He summoned all the Sufis of his *khānqāh* – including Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn. Then he gave a fowl to each one of them and said: "Slaughter it and bring it back to me. But ... each person must slaughter it at a place where there is no one else present." They all dispersed, went into the

forests and slaughtered their fowls where there was no one present. Then they returned. However, when Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn returned, he returned with a live fowl under his arm and stood by silently. The others started laughing at him and thought to themselves: "He could not even do this much!"

They all [proudly] placed their slaughtered fowls in front of their Shaykh. The Shaykh then turned to Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn and asked: "Bhāi, how is it you did not slaughter your fowl?" With utmost respect, Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn replied: "Hadrat, you ordered us to slaughter it at a place where there is no one present. I could not find any place where Allāh ﷻ was not present." The Shaykh then turned to the others and said: "Can you see the vast difference between his capabilities and yours? Why, then, should I not accord respect to him?"

On a different occasion, the Shaykh asked all the *murīds* to bring green grass. They all rushed to carry out his order, dispersed into the fields, dug out loads of green grass, placed it upon their heads and returned. When Shaykh Shahāb ad-Dīn returned, he came back with a little dry grass in his hand and stood before the Shaykh. The others laughed at him and said: "There is so much grass in the forest, yet he could not even bring one handful!" When the Shaykh asked him the reason for it, he replied: "Hadrat, what can I say? I found every blade of grass which I wanted to break engaged in the *dhikr* of Allāh ﷻ. I did not have the courage to cause Allāh's *dhikr* to come to an end because of me. I found only this much dry grass which was not engaged in Allāh's remembrance, so I brought it to you."

28. When Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* was on his death bed and had lost all hope of recovering, he started worrying about his young children, which is only human. In that condition he saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to him and said: "What are you worrying? Just as they are your children – they

are mine as well." He felt consoled by this. All of Shāh Sāhib's children became 'ālims and reached lofty ranks. The high rank which they enjoy is obvious. He had four sons. Presently, from amongst their children, only 'Abd as-Salām is not an 'ālim.

29. Whenever anyone would go to Maulānā Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* to pledge *bay'ah*, he would say: "I do not know anything, go to Maulwī Ya'qūb Sāhib. He learnt everything from his *nānā* (maternal grandfather, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib)."
Although Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib used to deny his own merits, everyone knew that he surpassed Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib. This was because he was always propagating the knowledge of *Dīn*.

30. Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib was an expert at interpreting dreams. Once a person in Delhi had a dream in which he saw people carrying Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *janāzah* through a certain gate. At that time, Maulānā Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was about to emigrate (perform *hijrah*). Maulwī Ya'qūb Sāhib said: "Bhāi Sāhib [referring to his brother, Maulānā Muḥammad Is-hāq Sāhib] is about to emigrate. The *janāzah* leaving is an indication that the knowledge of the Hadīth is going to depart with him."

31. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* once saw Janāb Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī *karramallāhu wajhahu* in a dream and asked him: "Which of the four *madhāhib* (plural of *madh-hab*) is in accordance with your *madh-hab*?" He replied: "None of them." He then asked him about the four *salāsil* (plural of *silsilah*) and received the same reply.

When Mirzā Jān Jānān *rahimahullāh* heard about this dream, he sent a message to Shāh Sāhib saying: "Are you sure this is not an imaginary dream? How can none of the four *madhāhib* or the four *salāsil* be in accordance with Amīr [al-Mu'minīn]?" Shāh Sāhib wrote the following reply: "It was a true dream. The meaning of 'not being in accordance' is that, in its entirety, and in every single

aspect, and in every subsidiary matter, no *silsilah* and no *madh-hab* is completely in accordance with his *madh-hab* because each of the *madhāhib* is a mixture of the *madhāhib* of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ. Some rulings are in accordance with Hadrat [Abū Bakr] Siddīq ؓ, some are in accordance with Hadrat 'Alī ؓ, and some are in accordance with Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, and so forth. The same applies to the *salāsīl* of the *mashā'ikh*."

32. Hadrat Mullā Nizām ad-Dīn Lucknowī *rahimahullāh* became a *murīd* of a Shaykh who was an *ummī* (unlettered, uneducated person). One day the Shaykh mounted a horse, handed a *huqqah* (smoking pipe) to the Maulānā, and marched him through the entire marketplace. The Maulānā – due to his excellent merits – did not object in the least to this service."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī then spoke about another *buzurg* (most probably Shaykh Jalāl Thānesarī). His *murīd* was a Khān Sāhib. When the Shaykh's horse was brought in from somewhere outside, it kicked the Khān Sāhib. He became angry and said: "The course of teaching and instruction is reserved for others, while the kicks of a horse are for me!"

One of the other *murīds* related this to the Shaykh. When the Khān Sāhib arrived with the horse, the Shaykh expressed his anger, and ordered him to be expelled from the *khānqāh*. The Shaykh's order was carried out and the Khān Sāhib was marched out.

The Khān Sāhib started crying and trembling. When he found no other way of entry, he crawled in through the drain. It so happened that it had rained. Due to the fact that the Khān Sāhib was blocking it, the water in the *khānqāh* could not flow out of the drain. The people started to clean the drain with a bamboo stick. It struck the Khān Sāhib on his head and blood started to flow into the water. The people were astonished and became worried. Upon inspection, they saw the Khān Sāhib's head stuck in the drain and reported this

to the Shaykh. The Shaykh felt sorry for him, and he was blessed with the honour of returning to his Shaykh.

33. There was a *buzurg* who was a weaver by trade. One day, he was delayed for the '*asr ṣalāh*. He rushed to a well to perform *wuḍū'* and when he drew out the water jug or bucket from the well, it was filled with silver. He threw it out and addressed Allāh ﷻ: "Do not joke with me! I am getting late for my *ṣalāh*." He lowered the vessel again and it came out filled with gold. He threw it out onto the ground and said: "Do not joke with me! I am really getting late for my *ṣalāh*." He then received *ilhām* (Divine Inspiration): "I did this so that people would not look down upon you."

34. An ordinary person asked Hadrat Bāyazīd Bustāmī *rahimahullāh*: "Hadrat, which qualities should a Shaykh possess, and which qualities should a *murīd* possess?" Hadrat thought to himself that, if he were to give an academic reply, the person would not understand anything. At the same time, it was essential to answer his question. So he said: "You must come to me tomorrow and I will tell you."

When the person came the following day, Hadrat gave him a letter and said: "Go and give this letter to such and such a person. I will answer your question when you return." The person to whom this letter was addressed lived thirty stations away and he had a handsome young son. In the letter the Shaykh instructed the addressee to host the newcomer in a separate room and that he should instruct his son to pay particular attention to the guest's needs. He should emphasize upon his son not to disobey the guest's orders in the least. In fact, even if he has to commit a sin, he should not refuse. Hadrat then instructed the person to reach his destination in exactly thirty days and to return on the 31st day.

The man carried out Hadrat's order, reached his destination on the 30th day, and handed over the letter. The addressee carried out the

instructions in the letter and the person had the opportunity of being in privacy with the young, handsome boy. His passion was ignited and he wanted to commit a forbidden act with the boy.

Suddenly he received a slap – as though it was Hadrat Bāyazīd's hand that had slapped him. He retracted immediately and regretted. He left the following day with a reply [to the letter], returned to the Shaykh and said: "Hadrat, you may now answer my question." Hadrat said: "The Shaykh must be like that slap which you received, and a *murīd* must be like the person to whom the letter was addressed." In other words, the Shaykh must save his *murīd* at the exact time of slipping, and the *murīd* must be totally obedient to his Shaykh – not going against his orders in the least, irrespective of whether he loses his worldly honour or not.

This was followed by a discussion of A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat then said: When I was in jail, the authorities wanted three thousand rupees as bail for my three-year sentence. Three people provided the bail, but the Englishman was hard-hearted. He refused it under the pretext that these three people were not residents of Gangoh.

My maternal uncle had taken an oath that he would not return to Gangoh until he freed me from jail and so he made effort to free me. In the meantime, our Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] arrived in Gangoh and the news started spreading that I have been released. Hadrat said: "There is still some time before he will be released. I have visited him." While I was in prison, I had a dream in which Hadrat visited me. He sat near me, consoled me, and then he departed. [Apart from this dream, I received no visit from him.] I was released one month later.

35. Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* was a military clerk and an extremely good-natured person. He used to show great affection towards me. Once he came to Gangoh, and a woodcutter

invited him for a meal. He accepted the invitation. A short while later, the father of Hāfiz Muhammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib – who was the deputy collector – came to beg him [Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib] to accept his invitation. He accepted this invitation as well. [When he did this], someone said to him: “Hadrat, the [woodcutter] will disapprove.” Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib made a fist and said: “I will break his mouth.” Then he added: “What will he bring anyway? He will bring a few *rotīs* and a bowl of *dhāl*. It will not suffice so many people. We will accept whatever he brings, as well as whatever the second person brings. We will then eat both offerings.”

The woodcutter arrived with five or six barley *rotīs* and a jug of milk. Hāfiz Sāhib kept it aside and gave leave to the woodcutter. When the second person brought his food, Hāfiz Sāhib fetched the food which the woodcutter had brought. Everything was placed together on the table mat, and everyone partook of whatever was presented. Hadrat used to relate many stories about Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib’s pleasant temperament and his happy-go-lucky nature. On one occasion he said: “Hāfiz Sāhib used to enjoy fishing. One day he was fishing on a river bank when someone said to him: “Hadrat! Us!” He asked: “You want me to catch you?”

36. Munshī Muhammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib once asked: “Hadrat, is there anyone still alive who had seen Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Barelwī?”⁴² Hadrat replied: “I cannot really remember right now, but I will tell you later.” Then Maulānā ‘Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib said: “There is a brick merchant in Sahāranpūr who is still alive.”

While on the same topic, Hadrat said: “Hāfiz Jānī of Ambheta once related to me: ‘We joined the caravan [of Sayyid Aḥmad Sāhib Barelwī] and we witnessed many *karāmāt* (miracles) over a period

⁴² He is the renowned *mujāhid*, Hadrat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*.

of time. Maulwī ‘Abd al-Hayy Sāhib Lucknowī, Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Sāhib Dehlawī, and Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib Rāmpūrī were also with him. All these personalities had joined Sayyid Sāhib in jihād.

Sayyid Sāhib waged the first jihād against Yār Muḥammad Khān, the ruler of Yāgistān. Sayyid Sāhib first sent his envoy to Yār Muḥammad Khān. The envoy went to him all by himself, and conveyed Sayyid Sāhib’s message. Yār Muḥammad Khān replied: “Ask the Sayyid, why is he waging a futile war? It will be of no benefit to him. Each one of his companions will be killed.” He then whipped the envoy and asked: “Will you come here again if the Sayyid sends you?” He replied: “Yes, I will come here again.” The envoy returned and related everything to Sayyid Sāhib, who [then] instructed him: “Very well, you must return to Yār Muḥammad Khān and say: ‘Forget about defeating us. You will drink urine and die.’”

In short, the battle took place, Yār Muḥammad Khān’s army was defeated and he fled. During the course of his flight, he felt thirsty and asked his servant for water. The servant replied that they had no water. He said: “[Then] bring me some urine if you have to.” He drank the urine and died.

Some time later, a battle ensued against Karak Singh, the son of Ranjit Singh – governor of Lahore. Many *mujāhidīn* were martyred, including Hadrat Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Sāhib and Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib, but the battlefield remained in the control of the *mujāhidīn*. When they started identifying the bodies, they could not find Sayyid Sāhib and his companions amongst them. People started searching in different directions. Others went searching in different villages and in the mountains, but no one could find them. As they were searching in different villages, people were relating to them that they had seen them here, or they had seen them there.

One person related: "I had a severe fever, and I saw three people walking. Sayyid Sāhib was one of them. I made a noise and shouted: 'Hadrat, where did you go? Why did you leave us? Everyone is waiting for you!' Upon hearing my noise, Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib turned towards me, but he did not say anything and continued on his way. I could not get up because of my illness. I [just] continued shouting.'"

Another person related: "We were searching for Sayyid Sāhib in a mountain when I suddenly heard a loud noise in the distance. Upon reaching there, I saw Sayyid Sāhib and his two companions seated. I offered *salām*, shook hands with them and said: 'Hadrat, why have you disappeared? Everyone is at a loss without you. We had no alternative but to appoint such and such a person as your *khalīfah*. We have all pledged *bay'ah* to him.' He approved of this and said: 'We have been ordered to remain concealed. That is why we cannot return.' After saying this, he inquired about the well-being and conditions of the rest of the caravan. Then he departed. I asked him to permit me to accompany him, but he refused. I tried [to convince him] again, but the moment I tried to follow them, my hands and feet became heavy. I was left standing there. I was at a loss as to how I would be able to walk. Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib and his companions then disappeared from my sight.'"

A third person related: "While searching for Sayyid Sāhib, we reached a certain village. [There] we were informed that Sayyid Sāhib had recently demolished a grave and that he had left a few moments earlier. [The grave] was situated at an elevated spot. We looked around, but could not see him."

37. Munshī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib said: "Sayyid Sāhib was born at the beginning of the 13th century (A.H.). It is now 1318 A.H. Thus, it is quite possible that he may still be alive." When he uttered the word 'possible' (*mumkin*), Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "*Amkan* (most likely)." Hadrat then added: "Sayyid Sāhib also

came to Ambheta. There was a *da'wah* (invitation to a meal) at Miyā Sābir Bakhsh Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī's residence. Maulwī 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib had gone to meet Maulwī Muḥammad Sālār Sāhib at his residence. When the latter asked him where he was staying, he told him that he was staying at Sābir Bakhsh's place. [Upon hearing this], Maulwī Muḥammad Sālār said: 'You are staying over at that *kāfir*'s place?' Maulwī 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib replied: 'He is not a *kāfir*.' He provided references from the books of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) as to why Sābir Bakhsh was not a *kāfir*. Maulwī Muḥammad Sālār responded: 'Maulwī Sāhib! Don't quote these Delhi books here. This is Ambheta.' Then Maulwī 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib changed the subject of the conversation and departed.

Sayyid Sāhib also came to Gangoh and stayed over in Sarā'e. Some of the residents had the honour of pledging *bay'ah* to him. One of them was a person who used to live in the Musjid. He was an ardent follower of the Sunnah. Whenever the month of Ramaḍān would end, he had the habit of addressing the people saying, 'Brothers! Another year of my life has passed.' The people used to laugh it off because it was his annual habit to say this. He eventually passed away on the 7th of Ramaḍān.

Sayyid Sāhib also went to Nānautah and many people became his *murīds*. One of his *murīds* related: 'The scene is still before my eyes ... Sayyid Sāhib was standing in the middle entrance of the Jāmi' Musjid. He was extremely handsome and fine-looking. He removed his turban, held one end in his hand, and asked those who wanted to pledge *bay'ah* to him to hold on to its length and return the other end to him. The turban looked like a horseshoe, because he was holding on to both ends.'

Sayyid Sāhib used to initiate people into *bay'ah* on *tauhīd* (Oneness of Allāh ﷻ), *risālat* (messenger-ship of Rasūlullāh ﷺ) and emulation of the Sunnah — nothing else. Sayyid Sāhib used to strictly emphasize the emulation of the Sunnah, and he was firmly

opposed to *bid'ah*. On one occasion he said to Maulwī 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib: 'If you ever see me doing anything against the Sunnah, you must inform me.' Maulwī Sāhib replied: 'Hadrat, if 'Abd al-Hayy ever sees you doing anything against the Sunnah, where will he remain with you?' In other words, 'I will leave your company.'

When Sayyid Sāhib just got married, he came a bit late for *ṣalāh*. The Maulwī Sāhib kept quiet and thought to himself that he was probably delayed because he was newly married. The following day the same thing happened and Sayyid Sāhib missed the *takbīr-e-ūlā* (first *takbīr* which marks the start of *ṣalāh*). When Maulwī 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib completed the *ṣalāh*, he said: 'Will it be the worship of Allāh or the pleasures of marriage?' Sayyid Sāhib remained silent and acknowledged his mistake. After that he started performing his *ṣalāh* on time – as before.

There was a person in Patna 'Azīmābād who used to regularly send three hundred and sixty sets of *kurtahs* to Sayyid Sāhib so that Hadrat could wear a new set each day. A few days before [Sayyid Sāhib] disappeared he said: 'O people! Although I wear a new set of clothes each day, if Allāh ﷻ Willed for me to wear just a shawl and be immersed in buffalo dung, it would be the duty of this servant to be pleased with this Order of Allāh ﷻ.' He made this statement several times. Then an Afghānī *murīd* asked him: 'What? Do you wish to separate yourself from us? Why are you repeatedly saying this?' Sayyid Sāhib replied: 'A servant really has to remain prepared to carry out any Order of Allāh ﷻ.'"

On another occasion Hadrat said: "Maulwī Aḥmad Ḥasan Sāhib Amrauhī once joined Sayyid Sāhib. His [spiritual] condition was such that, when a blanket and his bedding would be sent to him from his house during the winter, he would address his body parts: 'Do you wish to rest in this [bedding]? Would you like to remain in this? The only time I will be happy is when each and every one of you is covered with blood and scattered on the ground.' This was

exactly what happened [he was martyred].”

“Once Sayyid Sāhib passed by a town. A beautiful woman was standing at her door. Sayyid Sāhib rode by on his horse, merely glanced at her and continued. The prostitute darted headlong and fell at the horse’s legs. She begged him saying: ‘Hadrat, enable me to repent for my evil deeds and accept my *bay’ah*.’ Hadrat made her repent and asked her: ‘Who would you like to get married to?’ She had a lover whose name she mentioned, but he refused to marry her. Hadrat immediately got her married to one of the men who were with him in his caravan. When Sayyid Sāhib reached his place of residence, he said: ‘O people! Do not be surprised at what you saw. Even if a person displays greater power [than that which I did today], but it is against the Sunnah, you must never ever give any consideration to it.’”

During Sayyid Sāhib’s stay in Nānautā, a Shī’ah *maulwī* by the name of Ghulām Husayn went to meet him. Sayyid Sāhib was seated in one place and when this person entered, he did not pay any attention to him. The moment Sayyid Sāhib cast his influence on him, the unfortunate fellow left his shoes behind and fled, saying: “This Sayyid is a big magician.” [Thereafter] he remained in the forest for as long as Sayyid Sāhib was in Nānautā.

While talking about Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā’īl Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat said: “The *mujtahid* of the Shī’ah in Lucknow once changed his clothes [and appearance] and went to Sayyid Sāhib. Maulwī Ismā’īl Sāhib was not present at the time. He had gone somewhere for a stroll. The *mujtahid* came in and said: ‘I need to ask a few questions.’ Sayyid Sāhib replied: ‘You may pose them.’

Maulwī ‘Abd al-Hayy Sāhib adopted the principle of first listening to a person’s question, remaining silent for a while, and then giving a reply. Thus, the Maulwī Sāhib answered the *mujtahid*’s question

as per his habit. The *mujtahid* said: 'I am not satisfied in the least with this answer. I am leaving. I will ask the [Shī'ah] *mujtahid*, because I will receive a satisfactory answer from him.' Saying this, he got up immediately and left, leaving the impression that he was dissatisfied [with the answer he received].

A while later, Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib arrived. After he was informed of what had transpired, he was disappointed that he had not been present at the time. Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib was tall in stature and used to adopt a military appearance. One day he arrived unannounced at the *mujtahid's* assembly and said: 'I am in the company of Sunnīs most of the time and they pose various questions. I need answers to some of their questions.' The Shī'ah *mujtahid* did not recognize him and said: 'You may pose your questions.'

Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib started posing various questions and then continued to refute whatever answers the Shī'ah *mujtahid* gave. Eventually he was silenced. Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib stood up and said: 'I am going to Sayyid Sāhib. I will pose these questions to him. He always provides satisfactory answers and I am convinced by none but him.' Saying this, he left. After he departed, the *mujtahid* came to know that it was Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib. He felt very disappointed, and regretted his inability to answer his questions."

Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib was travelling on a palanquin [a seat carried on poles] when a student posed a question to him regarding the roundness of the earth. The Maulānā spontaneously made a fist, compared it to the roundness of the earth, and explained the entire question to him.

38. With regard to Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib Rāmpūrī *rahimahullāh*, Ḥadrat said: "He had a very sensitive temperament and it was difficult to control such a temperament while in the

caravan [the entire group travelling with Sayyid Sāhib to wage jihād]. He would abstain from eating for the slightest thing that went against his temperament.

When Maulwī Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib learnt of this, he made a point of seating himself next to Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib. When the food was placed in front of them, he blew his nose into a handkerchief and folded it. Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib got up immediately without eating anything. When the next meal was served, Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib held him by his hand and seated him next to him again. He blew his nose into his handkerchief again and exaggerated the entire action – to the extent of rubbing the mucus [into the handkerchief] right in front of his eyes. The Maulwī Sāhib expressed his disgust, got up, and remained hungry again. The same thing happened when the third meal arrived. [At that point] Maulwī Muḥammad Hasan Sāhib said: 'Maulwī Sāhib, even if you mix the mucus with the food this time, I will not be able to control myself [in other words, he was so hungry that he would be forced to eat].' They ate the food together and Maulwī Ismā'īl Sāhib said to him: 'Maulānā, your sensitive temperament cannot continue while you are part of this caravan. That is why I did this.'"

39. Maulānā Ismā'īl Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not practise upon the opinions of anyone if it contradicted an authentic, unabrogated Hadīth (*Hadīth saḥīḥ ghayr mansūkh*), and where there is no authentic, unabrogated Hadīth, no opinion is more firmly established than that of the Hanafī madh-hab.

On one occasion, these two personalities went to Lucknow and explained the issue concerning the compulsion (*fardīyyat*) of hajj upon the people of India. The '*ulamā*' of Lucknow differed with them in this regard. They offered the weak juristic statements which states that the ocean between India and the Hijāz removes the *amn* (safety) prerequisite from such a journey [and safety of the journey

is a prerequisite for the compulsion of hajj]. They eventually agreed that the decision of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib rahimahullāh would be accepted by both groups. The 'ulamā' of Lucknow wrote to Shāh Sāhib and he replied thus: 'Consider these two personalities to be my representatives. I also feel that hajj is fard upon the people of India.'"

40. Shāh Muḥammad 'Umar Sāhib rahimahullāh was Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl's rahimahullāh son and he was a majdhūb. On one occasion, Akbar Khān, the founder of the ghayr muqallids (those who do not follow any of the four imāms), delivered a talk in the Jāmi' Musjid in Delhi.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad 'Umar Sāhib rahimahullāh went to listen to his talk after the jumu'ah salāh. Some people advised him not to go because the speaker was a ghayr muqallid, but he replied: "So what? He is going to talk about the Qur'ān and the Hadīth of the Rasūl ﷺ." Shāh Sāhib attended the talk and sat down in murāqabah. He remained silent and listened to Akbar Khān for as long as he read from the Aḥādīth.

After reading one particular Hadīth, Akbar Khān said: "Even if Abū Hanīfah was here, we would have explained the meaning of this Hadīth to him." How could Shāh Sāhib keep quiet? He raised his head and said: "Are you going to explain the meaning to Abū Hanīfah when [great personalities like] Junayd and Shiblī were his muqallids?" Shāh Sāhib got up and struck him with a cane in such a way that his turban flew right off his head. A few Bengali students who were Akbar Khān's disciples got up to fight Shāh Sāhib, but Akbar Khān stopped them saying: "No, don't do anything. He is the son of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib rahimahullāh."

41. One dark night, Shāh Muḥammad 'Umar Sāhib was going somewhere. The night guards called out: "Who is it?" Shāh Sāhib did not reply. The guards repeated the question. He then said: "Can

you not see for yourself? The sun is out!" The guards started beating him when he said this. Suddenly, someone recognized him and said: "Hey, this is Maulānā Muḥammad 'Umar Sāhib." The guards apologized and said: "Hadrat, we did not recognize you." He said, "Don't worry, Miyā. Don't worry," and he continued on his way.

42. On one occasion, Imām Rabbānī said: "There was a *majdhūb* sāhib in Thānabhawan during the days of the Indian mutiny. An order was issued for the arrest of Maulwī Raḥmatullāh Sāhib whereupon he decided to emigrate. Some people advised him to go to the *majdhūb* sāhib for advice. He went to him and expressed his intention to him. The *majdhūb* sāhib said: 'Stay, nothing will happen to you.'

Some time later, Maulwī Raḥmatullāh Sāhib returned to him for further affirmation. [This time] he said: 'You must go away, you cannot stay here. You are a senior person and you cannot succumb to such petty things.'" The *majdhūb* then mentioned his father's name and said: 'You will continue receiving three rupees from him and six rupees from me.' Maulwī Raḥmatullāh Sāhib then made up his mind to emigrate, and he continued receiving nine rupees every month without fail."

Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, would there have been any evil consequences had Maulwī Raḥmatullāh Sāhib remained in India as per the *majdhūb* sāhib's [original] advice?" Hadrat replied: "Allāh ﷻ would have provided some means to prove his innocence."

43. Once Hadrat Murshid Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib visited Gangoh. My daughter was about three years old at the time. Hadrat Murshid Sāhib gave her five rupees [to buy] sweets. She took the money and placed it at his feet. He gave it to her again, and [again] she did the same thing. Hadrat tried to convince her several times to accept the

money. He said: "Take it, you are my daughter," but she did not accept it. Hadrat said: "After all, the daughter of a *faqīr* will also be a *faqīran* (female *faqīr*)." Hadrat Murshid Sāhib then made this *du'ā'* for her:

"This girl is lucky as she has not seen any difficulty in this world [and is thus she is needless]. The ones who face difficulties and troubles, turn to Allāh and become pious."

Thereafter Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, my daughter has no love whatsoever for this world."

44. While I was studying under my *ustād*, Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*, I developed an itchy skin rash on my entire body and had to wear gloves whenever I went to Hadrat Maulānā for lessons. I never missed a single day's lessons – not even during those days [of my illness].

One day he saw me suffering more than usual. He said: "Miyā Rashīd! Your condition has become like the person mentioned in this couplet:

*I have only one body, but so many ambitions.
Where do I place all of these in such a small-sized heart?*

*My entire body has become wounded.
Where, O where should I place the gauze?*

45. A person presented himself before Hadrat Imām Ja'far Sādiq and said: "Hadrat, I have come to learn the *ism-e-A'zam* (the greatest Name of Allāh ﷻ)." Hadrat made an appointment with him, saying: "You must meet me on such and such a day at such and such a river."

At the appointed time, the person arrived [at the river] and begged

him to teach him the *ism-e-A'zam*. Hadrat said: "Go into the river and continue mentioning my name." The man carried out his order, went into the river, and continued mentioning his name until the water reached above his navel. He mustered the courage and went in deeper. When he reached the middle of the river, he started drowning. While in this panicked state, he gave up repeating the Imām's name and, involuntarily, started saying *Allāh, Allāh*. He continued saying Allāh's Name and was [finally] able to emerge from the river. Hadrat Imām Ja'far Sādiq *rahimahullāh* then said: 'The *ism-e-A'zam* is that same blessed Name of Allāh, provided it emanates from your heart just as it emanated at the time when you were drowning.'

After relating this story, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "So, absolute sincerity and devotion in Allāh's Path is essential."

46. My *ustād*, Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, possessed a very high degree of *taqwā*. He had thousands of *murīds* and the majority of them were affluent and influential people. However, most of the time he lived a life of starvation.

Once, he spent several days in starvation. His servant went outside with a child in her lap and the effects of [severe] hunger could be visibly seen on the child as well. Muftī Sadr ad-Dīn happened to pass by and noticed the deathly appearance on the child's face. He asked the attendant: "How is the child? Why does he have such an unhealthy pallor?" She took a deep breath and said: "There has been no food in Hadrat's house for several days." The Muftī Sāhib felt very grieved upon hearing this. Upon reaching his house, he sent a hundred and fifty rupees with his servant, along with a note stating: "This money was not obtained from fees. It is my wage. Kindly accept it." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib sent it back with the message: "Even your wage is impermissible."

After this incident, Shāh Sāhib was wondering how the hunger

which he was experiencing secretly had become known. Upon investigation, he learnt that the servant had mentioned it. He summoned her and said: "If you cannot bear the hunger here, you may seek employment somewhere else. For Allāh's Sake, do not expose our secret."

47. On one occasion my family and I had to endure hunger but, *al-hamdulillāh*, I did not borrow any money from anyone.

MALFŪZĀT

*The gathering of the King
is like the sea [in its Munificence],
so value the time that you spend there.
O the one who has come to benefit,
the time of trade [to profit] has arrived!*

1. One day Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was lying down on his bed. He was not feeling too well. Maulānā Hakīm Mas'ūd Ṣāhib visited him in order to enquire about his condition and he mentioned something about a pain in the lower part of his shin. Then he related a story in this regard: Once, some boys decided to get their Miyājī (teacher) sick so that they could get leave. During the morning, one student came to him and asked: "Miyājī, how are you feeling today?" He replied: "I am well." A short while later, another student came and asked: "Miyājī, how are you feeling today? You look a bit down." The Miyājī sent him off as well. A while later a third fellow came. He also commented about the Miyājī not looking too good, and asked him how he was feeling. By then the Miyājī reconsidered and remained silent. After a while a fourth student arrived and he also said: "Miyājī, your face is looking down a bit. How are you feeling?" After listening to these stories, one after the other, the Miyājī started feeling quite sick and went to lie down. The students thus succeeded in getting him 'sick', obtained leave, and enjoyed

themselves playing. Thereafter, if anyone arrived, Miyājī would inform them that he was not feeling well. His friends checked his pulse and his overall condition and told him that there was nothing wrong with him. They said: "You are well. Why is a healthy person like you unnecessarily saying that he is ill?" However, the Miyājī was not immediately convinced. Only after much persuasion did they manage to convince him and then he [finally] got up from his bed.

2. Maulwī Mazhar Husayn Sāhib's grandfather was a simple and naïve person. On the 27th or 28th of Ramadān, his son, 'Abd ar-Rahmān – whose grave is near the western wall of the *khānqāh* – said to his father: "Abbājī, I saw the new moon." His father was convinced and went around telling people that the moon has been sighted and that it was *īd* the following day. The people said to him: "Maulwī Sāhib, what are you saying? Can the new moon ever be sighted on the 27th or 28th [of the month]?" He replied: "My son 'Abd ar-Rahmān is not a liar. He has very good eyesight. He must have seen it."

3. One day Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was resting. He was experiencing some pain in his right leg. Munshī Ibrāhīm Khān Sāhib came to visit him and asked him how he was feeling. He said: "I am feeling some pain in my right leg and since the people have got me used to having my legs massaged, I am feeling the pain even more."

Hadrat then told him this story: "Maulwī Muḥammad Bakhsh Sāhib Rāmpūrī *rahimahullāh* was my teacher. When he returned from *hajj*, people asked him: "Hadrat, did you make *du'ā'* for us as well?" Maulānā replied: "Yes, I hurled abuses at you and made *du'ā'* for you as well." They asked: "Why is that?" He replied: "I fell ill on board the ship during the return journey and did not have any of you [with me] to massage me. This caused me intense discomfort. The other passengers were my peers, how could I have asked any of them to massage me? I hurled many abuses at you at

that time because, had you not got me into the habit of receiving massages, I would not have felt such discomfort.”

4. A person asked: “When children are seated on a bed or stool and they swing their legs, the elders stop them from this. Is there any Shar‘ī prohibition in this regard?” Hadrat replied: “No. There is no such thing. There are many things which have become popular that are baseless. For example, when salt falls down [and we do not pick it up], people say:

‘We will have to pick it up [in the Hereafter] with our eyelids.’ These are common beliefs which are held by people from almost every place. They are popular in Paurab and North Deccan as well.” Maulānā Hakīm Mas‘ūd Sāhib then said: “Hadrat, it is popularly believed that when a peacock dances, drops of a liquid fall from its eyes. The peahens which are nearby peck at these drops, conceive, and lay their eggs. Is there any truth in this?” Hadrat replied: “Hadrat ‘Alī ❦ incorrectly stated this in one of his talks.”

5. Hadrat’s grandson, Miyā Sa‘īd Aḥmad, once came to him. Hadrat seated him next to him with much affection. He started to relate a dream which he had had. [After relating the dream] Hadrat said to him: “When you have a bad dream, you must read *Qul a’ūdhu bi rabbī nās* and *Qul a’ūdhu bi rabbil falāq* and blow all over yourself.”

Then Hadrat added: “Munshī Khalīl Aḥmad’s son used to have many dreams. He used to like me a lot. He was suffering from small pox and was on the verge of dying. One day he felt a bit better and said to his parents: ‘I will get better if you call Hadrat.’ I was conducting lessons when a vehicle arrived to collect me. After having my meal, I went to see him. I sat there for some time and returned. After my departure he said: ‘I am better now.’ Thereafter he passed away from the same illness.”

6. Miyā Sa'īd Aḥmad's billy goat was once grazing around the wild fig tree. Hadrat said: "There was a billy goat by the name of Manglā in a certain village. People thought it was mad. It was extremely strong and powerful. It would jump from the ground onto the shops in the marketplaces, and from one shop across to the other. The moment a person called out its name, it would stop [its antics] and come to that person. After they slaughtered it, they retrieved a stone from its stomach. This stone is known as *hajratul tīs* and it is beneficial against poisonous illnesses. On one occasion my daughter-in-law was stung. A part of this stone was applied and it proved beneficial.

7. One day, a discussion revolved around Imdād Pīr. Hadrat related: "A person in Rāmpūr went around collecting money and built a Musjid. The Musjid was completed but the building of the well was not successful. The well was dug, but mud continued flowing from it. He was quite concerned because he had no money left and the well was not settling down.

One day he was deep in thought regarding this problem and started to cry. He cried for quite some time until he was overcome with slumber. He had a dream in which Hadrat came to him and said: 'Do not worry, a person will come and sort out your problem.' He felt quite consoled by this [dream].

The following day a very tall and robust person arrived from another village and asked: 'Is there any well here which is under construction? Is there some problem with it?' He showed him the well and asked him how much he will charge for the job. He quoted a minimal price, asked for grass, reeds and some other material. Then he made some ropes, descended into the well, dug a few holes, used the ropes, and came out quickly. People say that the well settled totally after that and was fixed completely."

8. Munshī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān Sāhib once asked about reading "*Bismillāh...*" when commencing Sūrah Taubah, and whether it should be read if its recitation falls in the middle of another recitation. Ḥadrat said: "There is nothing wrong with that." He then explained the reason why "*Bismillāh...*" is not written. It is because it has not been ascertained whether [Sūrah Taubah] formed part of the previous Sūrah or whether it was a separate Sūrah altogether. When Ḥadrat 'Uthmān ؓ was asked about it, he gave the same reason."

9. Ḥadrat spoke about the *du'ā'*: "*A'ūdhu billāhi min 'adhābin nār...*" which is related from Ḥadrat 'Alī ؓ. He then spoke about the residents of foreign lands and the strength of people there. He said: "There was a businessman in Aligarh who was friendly with a officer. He was talking to the officer one day when he mentioned that the Afghans were stronger than the whites [Europeans]. The officer took [grave] offence to this.

The businessman then called an Afghan who was a *hīng* (a plant resin) salesman in the market. He was an informal trader. He prepared him to compete against a European and supervised the type of food that he ate. He then called one European who was well-known for his physical strength to compete against the Afghan.

The time and date for the fight was set and they faced each other at the appointed time. The Afghan said: 'You are nothing! I will give you one fist.' The European struck him with all his might, but the Afghan did not feel a thing. The Afghan said: "Strike me again so that I can feel something." He struck him again with all his strength and the Afghan's face turned a bit red. This was when the Afghan became angry. He struck the European on the head with such force that the top of his skull caved in and he died. The businessman took the Afghan away as fast as he could and sent him away to protect him from imprisonment."

10. Hadrat related another story in this regard: An Afghan, who was a horse-trader, stopped over at a large lodge in Sahāranpūr. He had an old ugly-looking horse. A person heard about this and went to see him. He noticed that the horse's legs were strong, but old, so he said: "Will you sell it to me for thirty rupees?" The trader said: "This horse is stronger than all the other horses which you see here. I do not feed it any grain or any good grass, yet it is very swift. If I were to send off all my horses, with all my goods, to Deoband early tomorrow morning while I remained behind, I will be able to have breakfast and leave at mid-morning on this horse – and I will still reach Deoband before the other horses. Now, if this horse is so strong and powerful, how can I sell it for thirty rupees?"

11. Mullā Shams ad-Dīn asked: "Hadrat, is it permissible for people to read a certain '*amal*' (incantation or *du'ā*) so that a dust storm can subside?" Hadrat replied: "This is just like medication and *du'ā*'s which are resorted to for other illnesses. There is nothing wrong with it. It is permissible."

12. Munshī Muḥammad Yāsīn Sāhib asked about the ruling with regard to reading *durūd-e-tāj*. Hadrat replied: "There are many *durūds* which have been composed by people and they have written their own *asānīd* (chains of transmitters) for them. There is nothing special about them, and there is no need for you to read them."

13. On one occasion Hadrat said: "I was studying Hadīth under Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib, when a person from Sahāranpūr came to greet him. Shāh Sāhib said to him: "Miyā, do you know Maulwī Hidāyat Aḥmad Sāhib Gangohī? Where is he?" He replied: "Hadrat, he passed away, but this is his son, Rashīd Aḥmad [pointing at Hadrat]." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said: "O! This is the first time I hear that he is his son."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī added: "Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib and Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Sāhib were my teachers and they used to treat me as

though I was their own child." Hadrat added: "I had intended pledging *bay'ah* to Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib, but eventually pledged to Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib."

14. A person expressed his desire to pledge *bay'ah*. Hadrat initiated him into the four *silsilahs*, taught him the recommended things and emphasized the performance of *ṣalāh*. Then he said: "I am merely a middleman. You must consider Hadrat Hājī Sāhib to be your *murshid* (spiritual guide). As per people's good thoughts about me, I also hope for forgiveness."

Hadrat then related the *bay'ah* of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "Hadrat received the glad tidings in a dream that he should become a *murīd* of a certain person. The person's image was also shown to him. At the time, Hadrat had [already] decided to pledge *bay'ah* to Shāh Sulaymān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* of Naunsah Shārīf. However, after he had this dream, he stalled [in doing so] and was quite confused about the identity of the person whom he had seen in his dream.

Someone eventually guided him to Hadrat Miyājī Nūr Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who said to him: 'Bhāi, one should not rely on one's dreams and thoughts.' This served to increase Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's intention. He expressed his desire to pledge *bay'ah*, and Miyājī Sāhib immediately accepted. He was the exact person whom he had seen in his dream and the person who had given him the glad tidings [in his dream] was his *dādā pīr* (the Shaykh's Shaykh), Hadrat 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib."

While on this subject, Hadrat also spoke about Hadrat Hāfiz Muḥammad Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*. Miyājī Sāhib made him wait for quite some time and only accepted him as a *murīd* after testing him thoroughly.

15. After [Hadrat told us] the abovementioned story, Munshī Ibrāhīm Khān Sāhib started speaking about Maulwī 'Abd al-Haq

Ambhetwī who also claims to be Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib's murīd. Hadrat remarked: "I was the one who had taken him to Hāfiz Sāhib, interceded on his behalf, and got him initiated as his *murīd*. Now he rejects our elders and has become our opponent.

On one occasion he requested [to be taught] some *dhikr* from Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib. Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib said to him: 'We only learnt two things: (1) the twelve *tasbīhs* and (2) *aurād* (plural of *wird* – different forms of *dhikr*). You spend the entire night passing wind and yet you are asking for more *wazā'if* (plural of *wazīfah*) and *aurād*!'"

16. Hakīm Siddīq Ahmad Sāhib once asked Hadrat about two [specific] people, and whom they had pledged *bay'ah* to? Hadrat replied: "To the big Hadrat." Hakīm Sāhib said: "It would have been more appropriate for them to pledge *bay'ah* to you because you were closer to them." Hadrat said: "It is better to establish a *nisbat* (bond or connection) with seniors."

Munshī Muhammad Ibrāhīm Khān then said: "Hadrat, there is a saying: 'How can you take benefit from someone [who is] far when your teacher is right next to you?' Why, then, should a person leave someone who is close to him and align [himself] with someone who is far away?" Hadrat replied: "Although he is physically far from them, he is extremely close in the help and guidance which he imparts." Hadrat then mentioned Hadrat Bāyazīd Bustāmī and his imprisonment as an example. (This story was related under the heading *Stories of the Righteous*.)

Munshī Sāhib then asked for A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's address, upon which Hadrat replied: "Makkah Mu'azzamah, Hāratul Bāb, Bi Khidmat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib." While on this subject, Hadrat said: "Hadrat is eighty-five or eighty-six years old, and I am seventy-two years old. I was born in 1244 A.H. There is a difference of thirteen or fourteen years between Hadrat and I."

17. While our Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] was residing in Panjlāsah, Punjab, there was a hunt for the mutineers. Someone informed the authorities that Hadrat was staying in a certain person's stable. The district officer personally came to the stable one night and wanted to open the locks. The owner of the house said to the Englishman: "Why did you take the pain of coming at this time?" He offered the excuse of wanting to see the horses and asked for the locks to be opened. The owner [obliged and] opened the locks.

The Englishman saw a bed with all the bedding laid out neatly, but Hadrat was not there. He looked around but did not find him anywhere. Then he asked the owner: "Whose bedding is this?" He replied: "It belongs to my younger brother." The owner of the house almost wet himself out of fear, but [fortunately] the Englishman did not ask any more questions. He viewed the horses and departed. Hadrat had probably received *kashf* regarding the [impending] arrival of the Englishman, and [thus he] departed before his arrival.

18. Hadrat said: "The faces of those who belittle and criticize the '*ulamā*' will be turned away from the *qiblah* in their graves." In fact, he said: "If anyone wishes, he may go and verify this. Because of the fact that the *ghayr muqallids* speak ill of the imāms, it is considered *makrūh* (reprehensible) to perform *ṣalāh* behind them."

19. A foreigner used to engage in *murāqabah* (meditation) in a Musjid. Another person used to sleep in the Musjid and [he would] snore loudly. The foreigner [was annoyed by this and] said to him: "Do not make a noise, it affects my *murāqabah*." The person's eyes opened and the noise stopped.

After a short while, he was overcome by sleep, and started snoring once again. The foreigner stopped him again. This happened quite a few times. Then the foreigner became enraged and slashed his

throat with a knife shouting: "You are disturbing my *murāqabah!*" The entire Musjid was soiled with blood.

20. Once a traveller stopped over at the Musjid but did not go to meet Hadrat. After the *maghrib salāh* he sent a message with one of Hadrat's *khādims* requesting permission to meet him. Hadrat replied: "He may come if he wishes."

When a group of people had gathered in the assembly the following day, the traveller entered and sat down. Before his arrival, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was talking about the sincerity and devotion of the past *murīds*. He spoke about Mullā Nizām ad-Dīn Lucknowī, and a Khān Sāhib who was a *murīd* of Shaykh Jalāl. Hadrat then spoke about the importance of following the Sharī'ah, and related a few stories of the *buzurgs*.

After the *maghrib salāh*, the traveller said to Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib: "This Maulwī Sāhib [referring to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī] wants me to serve him [make his *khidmat*], but with what expectations should I serve him when he himself says: 'I do not know anything.' I have had two dreams on account of which I have come to Gangoh. In one dream I was speaking ill of Maulwī Sāhib. He entered and struck me with a knife. In the other dream I saw Maulwī Sāhib somewhere and then Hadrat Hājī Sāhib also arrived. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib then said to Maulwī Sāhib: 'You must pay attention to him.'" The traveller eventually left without gaining anything.

The following day Hadrat Imām Rabbānī remarked: "Although I had addressed everyone present yesterday, my words were actually directed at the traveller."

On another occasion Hadrat also spoke about this traveller, saying: "He actually possesses good thoughts." [Upon hearing this] Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib quoted the conversation which he had had

with the traveller. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī then said: "Miyā, if anyone comes here to learn, we will teach him."

21. On one occasion Hadrat said: "Some of the Naqshbandī *mashā'ikh* have laid so much emphasis on-isolation for silent *dhikr* that the person must not even hear the sound of birds. As for those who are engaged in loud *dhikr* ... they do not have to adhere to such rules."

22. When a person hears the stories of the *buzurgs*, his heart desires to become like them. Why should his heart not desire this? After all, he is a Muslim! However, when it is the time to put everything into practice, he is not able to do anything.

On one occasion our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's sister-in-law said to him: "So many people come to you [and benefit from you], teach us something also." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib replied: "You will not be able to do anything." When she persisted, Hadrat said to her: "Okay, you must now eat half the amount of *rotīs* which you normally eat." The poor woman did this once or twice and said: "I cannot eat half the amount of *rotīs*, but I will keep fast if you tell me." Hadrat said: "If you cannot give up half, how are you going to give up all?"

23. Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib Murādābādī asked: "Hadrat, is it permissible for us to speak about the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ while reading from a book when we explain it – without adhering to [any of] the *bid'āt* which is in vogue?"

Hadrat replied: "What is wrong with that?" He continued: "Sultān Jahān [once] sent a message to me, asking me to inform him of the permissible way of *maulūd*." I replied: "Come here to the Musjid." He replied: "The women also want to hear, so it will be better if you could come to my house." Hadrat continued: "I then gave the book, *Tārīkh Ḥabīb Ilāh*, of Muftī 'Ināyat Aḥmad Sāhib Marhūm to Maulwī Khalīl Aḥmad and asked him to go.

[When he arrived at] the house, he saw a carpet laid out. Sultān Jahān said to him: 'If this [carpet] is not permitted, I can have it removed.' Maulwī Sāhib said: 'No.' The *maulūd* commenced. He first explained the verse لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ ("There has come to you a Messenger...") and then explained the statements and actions of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. He followed this by [providing] an explanation of the prevailing *bid'āt* and exposed the present day [pseudo] Sufis. He then explained the stories surrounding Rasūlullāh's ﷺ birth as well as some other incidents from *Tārīkh Ḥabīb Ilāh* and concluded his programme.


Those whose incorrect beliefs were being refuted by Maulwī Sāhib's programme became very displeased with Sultān Jahān and said to him: 'You have caused our humiliation by calling him to your house.' In reality, great benefit stemmed from this *maulūd*. Many people believed that those who refuted *maulūd* were rejecting it outright. This belief was removed from their hearts."

24. One day Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was resting on his bed outside. He fell asleep. A short while later he woke up and said: "I dreamt that I went to Rāmpūr (or Nānautah). Upon reaching there, I saw such and such a person standing outside, saying: 'Come see! I have built a house.' The house was quite large, but the man was a weak and sickly person." Hadrat then said: "It was Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's maternal uncle. He was very engrossed in this world, but – *inshā Allāh* – he has now been forgiven."

25. Once, in Hadrat's assembly, there was a discussion regarding *raml* (foretelling the future through the use of numerals, divination or geomancy). Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked: "Hadrat, is *raml* permissible?" Hadrat replied: "There are two types of *raml*: (1) The essential qualities of things are learnt from it, (2) knowledge of the unseen is obtained. The first type is permissible. The second type is impermissible. But beware, don't ever get involved in this."

Hadrat then read a verse of Sūrah ar-Ra'd and said: "From this verse we obtain the formula for *kīmiyā* (transformation of baser metals into gold) through the principles of *raml*." He then turned the discussion to *kīmiyā* and said: "Sayyid Qāsim Sāhib, a *buzurg* in Makkah Mu'azzamah, was from amongst the *khulafā'* of Sayyid Sāhib Barelwī rahimahullāh. He was a good person. When I met him, he said to me: 'We made a lot of gold with Sayyid Sāhib. You should also learn how to make it. Go and tell Miyā Sāhib (referring to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib) to send Hāfiz Ahmad Husayn (Hājī Sāhib's nephew) with you. I will teach both of you.'

I went to Hadrat and said: 'Do not sent Hāfiz Ahmad Husayn Sāhib to him. He will become engrossed in *kīmiyā* and destroy himself.'"

26. Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib rahimahullāh had a *nisbat-e-salāti* with Hadrat 'Alī , and Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib received it from him. While in Makkah Mu'azzamah, our Hadrat Hājī Sāhib went to Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib to learn this from him. I was not present [in Makkah] at the time, so I could not go with him. When I met Hadrat Hājī Sāhib later on, I explained the essence of it to him. [Thereupon] he said to me: "There is no need for you to go to Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib."

27. There was a Khān Sāhib amongst the *murīds* of Hadrat Miyājī Nūr Muhammad Sāhib rahimahullāh. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib, together with another *murīd* went to visit the Khān Sāhib. The Khān Sāhib did not know whose *murīd* this third person was, so he asked Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "Whose *murīd* is he? It seems my Miyā's hand is with him." Hadrat said: "He is Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib's murīd." After hearing this, some of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's khādims asked: "So Miyājī's hand will also be with us?" Hadrat replied: "Yes, it is not far-fetched. After all, you are also his *murīds*. I am merely the intermediary."

28. Once Hadrat was talking about the correction and culturing of one's character (*tahdhīb-e-akhlāq*). He said: "When Allāh ﷻ removes pride from a person's heart, he has achieved everything." He then said: "Once I was in Thānabhawan and there were many people sitting around me. There was a Khān Sāhib who was a very straight-forward person. While sitting in that assembly, he said to me: 'Maulwī Sāhib! Speak the truth. Since so many people are sitting around you, has it not created a feeling of superiority in your heart?' I replied: 'Khān Sāhib, I am speaking the truth. I did not even think about it.' The Khān Sāhib was quite pleased and said: 'If that is the case, it is good.'"

29. A person asked the ruling with regard to undertaking a journey for the sake of visiting graves [of the elders]. Hadrat replied: "The '*ulamā*' differ regarding this issue. I cannot pass a ruling." Maulwī Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib felt a *fatwā* of impermissibility should be issued. Hadrat said: "A person may act as he wishes, but why should he impose [his opinions] upon others?"

30. Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib asked for a ruling regarding '*ushr*' (one tenth tax on the produce of the land). He asked if it was *wājib* upon the land-owner as well, or only upon the farmer or the lease holder? Hadrat replied: "Imām [Abū Hanīfah] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* differed with regards to this issue and a *fatwā* has been issued [based] on both opinions. One may act on the ruling of either one of the two imāms. The Maulwī Sāhib then asked: "What does Hadrat think? Whose opinion is preferred?" He replied: "Imām Sāhib's because ما اخرجت الارض (whatever the land produces) does not go to the land-owner." With regards to '*ushr*', Hadrat then said: "There is a lot of blessing in it."⁴³

⁴³ According to the *fatāwā* issued prior to the partition of India, any property owned by a Muslim from the time of his forefathers, without

31. Maulwī Muḥammad Ḥasan Sāhib asked: "What is the opinion with regard to labelling the Shī'ah as *kāfir*?" Ḥadrat replied: "Our teachers – ever since Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – have always considered them to be *kāfirs*. Some scholars consider them to be like the Ahl-e-Kitāb (Jews and Christians), while others consider them to be *murtad* (apostates)." The Maulwī Sāhib then asked: "What is Ḥadrat's opinion?" He replied: "I consider their '*ulamā*' to be *kāfirs*, and their followers to be *fāsiqs* (flagrant sinners)."

32. On one occasion I was leading the *tarāwīḥ salāh* and Maulwī Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib and Maulwī Muḥammad Mazhar Sāhib were also amongst the *muqtadīs* (followers). At some point I made a mistake but neither of the two corrected me. Each one thought that, if it was a mistake, the other would have corrected me.

33. During the time when there was an uproar about the book *Fayṣlah Haft Mas'alah*, Ḥadrat said: "Nothing was said about it in India, but now we are receiving some strange information from Arabia. The fact is that Ḥadrat [Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] accepted whatever people said."

Ḥadrat then mentioned the name of a Ḥājī who related the following incident to him: "We went to visit Ḥadrat [Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] in Makkah Mu'azzamah. Someone presented an *istiftā'* (question) in which it was stated that, if one had to bear in mind the difficulties which have to be borne during the *hajj* journey, [it would become clear that] the compulsion of *hajj* falls away for women.

After listening to the reasons behind the need to issue such a ruling, Ḥadrat was ready to stamp his approval. However, [the Ḥājī and his

ever being in the ownership of a *kāfir*, was '*ushri* land and a tax of ten percent of the produce had to be paid to the *Bayt al-Māl*.

companions] stopped him and said: 'Incidents [excuses] of this nature are experienced by those who are not prepared to spend the necessary money due to their stinginess and miserliness.' [Thereafter] Hadrat withheld his hand and did not stamp the *fatwā*."

Hadrat continued: "If no one had stopped him at the time, hajj would have fallen away for women. When the lessons of *Mathnawī* are conducted, all types of people attend and various topics are discussed. This causes a lot of misunderstanding. I wrote to Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] several times asking him not to delve into *masā'il* and suggested that he should rather explain straight forward facts to them which their minds are able to understand."

While on this subject, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said: "Rām and Kanihyā (Hindu gods) were initially good people, but see how the latter generations have elevated them [to the level of divinity]."

34. Maulwī Hakīm Hayāt 'Alī Sāhib once related a dream: "I saw myself naked. I was wearing only a *langotī* (a cloth generally worn by wrestlers between the legs to cover their private parts)." Hadrat said: "It is only the *langotī* which has left you deficient." He continued: "There are two types of dreams which are good for a *sālik*: (1) [When] he sees himself naked – and this is a reference to severing all relations, (2) [when] he sees himself wearing a really long *kurtah*."

35. Someone asked: "Who is the imām of the Muslims at present and who should the Muslims essentially recognise as their imam essential for the Muslims to recognize?" Hadrat replied: "The sultān."

36. In one of the *majālis* (assemblies), a discussion ensued regarding the debt of dowry (*mahr*). Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib said: "[Nowadays] hundreds of thousands of rupces are stipulated as the *mahr*, but the one who [is supposed to] pay has no intention of

ever paying, and the one who [is supposed to] receive has no expectation of ever receiving." Hadrat then remarked: "No matter what happens here [in this world], we will have to pay for it in the Hereafter.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَّيْنِ

*"O Allāh! I seek refuge in You
from being overpowered by debts."*

37. Someone complained: "Mullā Murād Sāhib Muzaffarnagrī does not come here to Hadrat. He goes to Hājī Sāhib in Deoband." Hadrat said: "So what is wrong with that? A person must go where he considers it beneficial to go. Obviously, he must not reject others."

38. Maulwī Hayāt 'Alī Sāhib relates: "My eyes opened one night and I felt lethargic. I thought to myself that Allāh ﷻ Alone knows whether our striving [actions] are accepted or not. While thinking about this, I fell to sleep and saw A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in a dream. He was reciting a verse. Then my eyes opened. I related this dream to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and he said: 'When a person does anything for Allāh ﷻ, it is certainly accepted.'"

39. When I went on my first hajj, the crescent for Dhū al-Hijjah could not be seen on the 29th of Dhū al-Qa'dah. The sighting could only be established through testimony (*shahādat*) and I was doubtful about it.

I was quite disappointed and thought to myself that I had undertaken such an arduous journey, and still my hajj would be invalid! It so happened that the moon eclipsed on the 13th of Dhū al-Hijjah that same year. This convinced me even further that my hajj was definitely invalid, because the moon always eclipses on the

14th or 15th. However, on one occasion I was travelling from Rāmpūr when I saw the 29th moon and it eclipsed on the 13th. I then realized that the moon eclipses on the 13th as well, and thus my hajj was valid.

40. While I was studying in Delhi under Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib rahimahullāh, my meals were provided by a certain family and I used to go personally to fetch my food. There was a *majdhūb* whom we used to pass along the way. We were fully engrossed in our studies. Let alone a Sufī, we did not have the time to turn our attention to anything.

One day the *majdhūb* said to me: “Maulwī, where do you go?” I replied: “I go to fetch my food.” He said: “I see you taking this road twice a day. Is there no other route?” I replied: “There is another route which goes through the marketplace and my eyes may fall on the different types of things which are there, and I might be discomforted by looking at certain things.” He remarked: “It seems you do not have sufficient money. You must come to me and I will teach you how to make gold.” At the time, I agreed to go to him, but when I reached the *khānqāh*, I became occupied with my studies and forgot all about it.

The following day I met the *majdhūb* and he said: “Maulwī, why did you not come?” I replied: “My studies do not permit me any spare time.” I will come on Friday. Friday came, but I was busy with my studies and forgot about going to him. I met him again and he said: “Maulwī, you promised to come but did not come!” I replied: “I forgot.” I then promised to go to him the following Friday.

Several Fridays passed, and I forgot to go to him on each one of them. One Friday the *majdhūb* came to the *khānqāh* himself and took me to the grave of Shāh Nizām ad-Dīn Sāhib. He showed me a particular kind of grass and told me that this grass could be

obtained from such and such a place. He asked me to look at the grass carefully. I looked at it and examined it thoroughly. He then broke some of it, took me to my room, seated me before him and made gold out of it. The gold was made and I also learnt the art. He said to me: "Sell it and use it for your needs." He then departed.

I was busy studying. Where did I have the time to go to the marketplace to sell the gold? He met me the next day and said: "Maulwī, you did not sell the gold? Very well, I will sell it for you." He came later, took the gold, sold it and brought its equivalent in cash to me.

Some time later I met him again and he said: "Maulwī, get me some guavas." I bought him two *paise* worth of guavas and placed it before him. He took one of them in his hands and started laughing. He then started looking at each of the guavas and said to each of them: "The Maulwī will eat you." He then gave me the guava which was in his hand, and I felt that it was extremely hot. I thought to myself that, if I were to eat this guava, I would also become a *majdhūb*. I became very afraid and did not eat it. I took the guava quietly, got up and departed. I left the guava in my room and forgot about it.

About two weeks later my eyes fell upon it and I noticed that it was as fresh as it had been two weeks ago. It did not change in the least. In fact, it was just as hot as it had been [two weeks earlier]. (I cannot remember what Hadrat said after that. I think he said that someone else ate it and that he became a *majdhūb*).

After some time the *majdhūb* came again and said: "Maulwī, I am going away from here. Come with me and we will see that grass again." He took me with him and showed me the grass at a place called Sultānjī Sāhib and then he departed.

41. Hadrat's tooth was painning one day. He said: "I think if I uproot the tooth, the pain will go away, but I do not feel like doing that. This is exactly the condition of those who are attached to this world. They cannot bear the little difficulty of this world and they fall into the calamities of the Hereafter."

42. As one's children get older, one becomes happier. But, you do not think that their life-span is decreasing by the day and that they are going closer to death.

43. "I had a dream in which Maulwī Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib [Nānautwī] was looking like a bride and I was getting married to him. [I interpreted it as follows]: Just as husband and wife benefit from each other, I benefited from him and he benefited from me. It was he who spoke highly of Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] *rahimahullāh* and urged me to become his *murīd*, and it was I who interceded in his favour before Hadrat and made him his *murīd*." [Upon hearing all this], Hakīm Muḥammad Siddīq Sāhib Kāndhlawī quoted the verse:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

"Men are [the] overseers of women."

[Thereupon] Hadrat remarked: "Yes, after all I am tutoring his [Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Nānautwī's] children."⁴⁴

44. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] asked: "Hadrat, is it permissible to place a *shajarah* (the spiritual lineage of a Shaykh) in a grave?" Hadrat replied: "Yes, but it must not be placed inside

⁴⁴ Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* had passed away by then and his *murīds* reverted to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī for spiritual training and instruction. [Translator]

the deceased's *kafan* (shroud). A niche should be dug [in the grave] and the *shajarah* should be placed inside it." Hadrat Maulānā then asked: "Is there any benefit in this?" Hadrat replied: "Yes. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had a *murīd* who had [one of] Shāh Sāhib's shoes. When he was on his deathbed, he requested that Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* should place it in his grave after his death. His request was fulfilled. Maulwī Nadhīr Husayn [a *ghayr muqallid*] and some others started mocking this and sarcastically asked: 'How much dirt was stuck to that shoe? How much mud was on it?' Shāh Sāhib responded: 'If this act was impermissible, you should have convinced me of it with proof. What was the need to resort to mockery and sarcastic remarks? I will no longer sit in your company.'

It was their habit to sit together in the Musjid after the *jumu'ah salāh*. Some time after this incident, one of Shāh Sāhib's students wrote a book titled *Darb an-Ni'āl 'alā Ru'ūs al-Juhhāl* (*Striking shoes on the heads of ignoramuses*). In this book he proved – with examples from the practices of the Sahābah and others – that it is permissible to place the *tabarrukāt* (items of blessing) of pious people inside the grave. When those who rejected this practice studied this book, they regretted their mockery.

45. Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib relates: "In 1317 A.H., I presented myself before Hadrat with the intention of renewing my *bay'ah*, but I could not pluck up the courage to make this request to him. Whenever others were initiated as *murīds*, I would repeat the words of *taubah* silently.

One day Hadrat said: 'I requested renewal of my *bay'ah* to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, but he did not accept my request.' It was then that I told Hadrat: 'I also left my hometown with the same intention.' Hadrat replied: 'Yes, all the *maulwīs* think along the same lines.'

46. During our student days, any person who studied Arabic would be greatly valued and he would be employed in senior positions. Those who were studying with us thus received very good jobs. My Māmū Sāhib (maternal uncle) also tried to get me appointed in a senior post, but I did not agree. He was very displeased with me. When he realized that I would never agree to be employed by the British, he compelled me to work as a teacher for a *ra'īs* (a senior person in a municipality). By virtue of my uncle's intervention, I was really valued and honoured at my place of employment, but I left my job within a few days and returned home. My uncle realized that I did not want to work for an employer. He did not mention anything in this regard again, and did not become unhappy with me either.

Hadrat then added: Allāh ﷻ has been really kind to me. I have spent my entire life in this *khānqāh* and Allāh ﷻ has provided me with everything.

47. A person once asked: "Is it permissible to take an offering of sweetmeats to a grave, to make *fātiḥah* in the name of a *buzurg*, and to distribute the sweetmeats thereafter?" Hadrat replied: "If it is done solely in Allāh's Name and done with the sole intention of sending reward (*īsāl-e-thawāb* to the deceased), then there is no harm in it. However, if it is done in the name of a *pīr* – as is the norm amongst most of the ignoramuses – then it is *ḥarām*."

[Upon hearing this] someone asked: "Hadrat, if a person intends *īsāl-e-thawāb* only, he can do this from wherever he likes. Why is it necessary for it to be sent to the grave?" Hadrat replied: "A *khādim* normally remains at the grave. It can be given to him. What is wrong with that?" After giving this reply, Hadrat related: "A person brought some sweetmeats to the grave of Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* and asked me to make *fātiḥah*. I asked: 'Are these sweetmeats dedicated in the Name of Allāh?' He replied: 'No, they are in the name of the *pīr*.' I told him: 'Go, you rejected one!

Get away from here!”

48. A person once posed a question related to divorce. After answering his question, Hadrat related the following story: “An orator once came to Gangoh and started delivering his talk with much pomp and zeal. His wife and children had also accompanied him.

One day, he issued a divorce to his wife in such a loud voice that it could be heard from quite a distance, but he did not separate himself from her and continued living with her. Later on he came to visit me, so I asked him: ‘After divorcing your wife, what leeway did you adopt to continue living with her?’ The orator replied: ‘I pronounced the word *talāq* with a ت and not a ط.’ I became very angry with him and said: ‘What! Even if you were to add the letter خ at the end, can any muftī pass a *fatwa* in your favour?’ Upon hearing this, he left Gangoh.”

49. Maulānā Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib once asked: “Hadrat, should the word *sayyidinā* be added to the *durūd* which is read during *ṣalāh*?” Hadrat replied: “Yes.” The Maulwī Sāhib then asked: “I did not come across the word *sayyidinā* in any narration.” Hadrat Imām Rabbānī remarked: “Although Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not say the word *sayyidinā*, it behoves us to add it. You can understand it through the following example: When I pledged *bay’ah* to Hadrat [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib], he said to me at the time of the *bay’ah*: ‘Say: I have pledged *bay’ah* at the hand of Imdādullāh.’ I said: ‘I have pledged *bay’ah* at the blessed hand of Janāb Hājī Imdādullāh.’ Janāb Maulwī Shaykh Muḥammad Sāhib was present at the time and commented: ‘An intelligent person has come here today. In the past, others would merely confine themselves to saying that they have pledged *bay’ah* at the hand of Imdādullāh.’”

‘AMALĪYYĀT

Allāh ﷻ sent Hadrat Imām Rabbānī as a refuge and support to His troubled and distressed creation, and embellished him with the distinguished garment of providing relief. Thus he served as a guide to steer those who were trembling in their calamities, [as a safe haven to] those who were sick and had lost hope and become despondent, and [as a solace to] those who were anxious and distressed. He had a natural dislike for [*'amalīyyāt*] because his lofty position entailed internal instruction and tutoring, spiritual guidance and remedy.

However, during our earthly sojourn, there is a temporary bond between the body and the soul. The nature of this bond has brought about a special connection between the well-being and progress of the soul and the well-being of the body and the necessity for the removal of aches and concerns.

Hadrat's use of plants and Unānī medication proved beneficial in the treatment of physical ailments, and his service as a Hakīm held great benefit for the creation. However, this [physical treatment] merely served as a prelude to his position as a spiritual guide and a means [through which he progressed towards] spiritual training and rectification.

By resorting to *ta'wīdhāt* (amulets), *nuqūsh* (drawings), *'amalīyyāt* and *aurād* (reading of verses, *du'ā's* etc.), Hadrat was able to attract the creation towards himself, provide them with internal tranquillity and peace and make himself their beloved. In this way, he was able to direct his attention towards their spiritual rectification and convey them to the Threshold of Allāh ﷻ through internal courage. All of this was also simply a prelude to his lofty position and essential responsibility [as a spiritual guide].

The excellence of an intelligent ambassador and envoy lies in his

ability to adopt the correct means for the fulfilment of his responsibility of representation and ambassadorship. At the same time, he should not become so engrossed in the means that it causes him to lose sight of his objective and goal. Therefore, whenever he received such requests [for *ta'wīdh*], he would reply: "I am not an *'āmil*. I do not know anything about *ta'wīdh* and the like." However, if a person's persistence went beyond the limits, or if Hadrat himself was naturally overcome by affection for the creation, he would ask the person to read whatever came to his mind at the time, or he would write it down as a *ta'wīdh* and give it to the person.

Without doubt, the total submission which was boiling in his heart and which he verbally expressed most of the time, naturally recoiled from *'amalīyyāt*. In fact, he felt severely averse to it. He understood full well that people's notions in this regard had transgressed the limits, and that these notions were becoming the cause of the corruption of their beliefs. Thus, while he was personally very cautious in this regard, Hadrat would remove the incorrect beliefs of those who sought *ta'wīdh* or *nuqūsh*. He would establish their belief in *taqdīr* (fate) – which is a great pillar of this sanctified religion of Islam.

With regard to *'amalīyyāt*, the demands of his temperament is portrayed in a statement which he made on one occasion: "Tattered rags and rubbish are used to start a fire in this world. If a person should use an expensive shawl, which has actually been made to adorn him and to give him honour, in order to light a fire, then he would [indeed] be a foolish and unintelligent person. Similarly, Allāh's Name cannot be used to earn of this trifling world. The measures of acquiring from this trifling world are also trifling and insignificant. In contrast, Allāh's Name is very great, and great things should be acquired through His Name. Those great things are Allāh's Pleasure and Happiness."

A person once wrote to Hadrat, and asked if it would be permissible to read Sūrah al-Muzzammil for the sake of increase in sustenance. Hadrat replied that it was permissible and that the person may read it. However, to those who were present [while dictating the letter] he remarked: "I do not approve of reading the Qur'ān for the purpose of earning of this world."

There were many sick people who had lost all hope of recovery, and many who were suffering from various aches and concerns. [As a last resort], they all came to see Hadrat, but he flatly refused [to treat] them. In fact, he gave them such a harsh and stern reply that this final hope of theirs was also dashed.

Although his refusal to treat these people on such occasions was unpalatable [to them], it was essential to convince them that he was a slave and an obedient servant of Allāh ﷻ and that his refusal was in fact the only way in which he could help them.

There were a few reasons why he refused treatment in this way: [Firstly], it left no room for any further questions or follow-up arguments.

[Secondly], it was later established that such a refusal to treat someone was only expressed where the person's failure had been predestined, or where it would have corrupted the beliefs of that particular person or the beliefs of others if he were to agree to treat him. That would have caused Hadrat to waste his own valuable time.

[Thirdly], at times Hadrat's refusal caused the person to lose hope completely and, consequently, it became the means through which he could achieve his objective. This becomes possible because, Allāh's All-Encompassing Mercy cannot tolerate the restlessness of His troubled servants. His Mercy desires that the servant should sever all his hopes from everyone apart from Allāh ﷻ and that he should turn towards Him Alone. When a person does this, he receives Allāh's Assistance and realizes his objective. Therefore,

although Hadrat was a Rabbānī (a true servant of the Lord) – he was not the Rabb (the Lord). He was an accepted servant of Allāh and not Allāh. If an afflicted person came to him, having placed all his hopes in him alone and this resulted in an obstacle between the person and Allāh's Mercy, then Hadrat's point blank refusal – which caused the person to lose all hope – would immediately jolt the person's heart, bring him to his senses, and cause him to become a devoted beggar before Allāh ﷻ Alone. Then he would say to Allāh ﷻ: "Now I have no support and no refuge apart from You." The ocean of Allāh's Mercy would burst forth immediately, and the person would achieve his objective there and then.

These are the mysteries which are always concealed in the different conditions of the *Ahlullāh*. It is not necessary for us to know them. May Allāh ﷻ bless us with the ability to respect the different and diverse conditions and states of these holy people. May Allāh ﷻ assist us not to be amongst those who object to them or those who act disrespectfully towards them. Our deficient understanding and intelligence cannot fathom these things.

When the lamp was lit from the majestic light of Prophethood and placed in the heart of a *sāhib-e-nisbat Shāykh*, it was as if an announcement had been made to the world:

Whatever he says, is said out of experience.

Although Imām Rabbānī did his utmost to abstain from the occupation of '*amalīyyāt*, *nuqūsh* and *ta'wīdhāt*, people considered him to be their leader and refuge, and thus they flocked to him in droves.

It would be impossible to determine how much discomfort it must have caused Hadrat to attend to the countless people who came to see him, especially since his heart was so attracted to solitude that, at times, he would become agitated upon seeing a single *khādim*

before him. So, although (due to human constraints) he was dis comforted by all these people, he could not see himself associated with the sins of others [and therefore he accommodated them].

Apart from this, it would have damaged his greatest service (*Dīnī* progress and spiritual training) if he were to refuse to treat these needy people. That would have resulted in the destruction of their lives – both in this world and the Hereafter.

A poet aptly says:

*They neither found Allāh,
nor did they gain nearness to any idol.
They were neither on this side ... nor on that.*

According to Imām Rabbānī, the reformation of the world, physical comfort, and finding the fruit of spiritual tranquillity, can only be realized through *du'ā'* and through directing yourself [to Allāh ﷻ], or through courage and spiritual influence. In reality, this was the most tried and tested '*amal* and the most effective '*ta'wīdh*, and it should be referred to as a single *naqsh* (drawing) representing hundreds and thousands of *nuqūsh* (drawings). At times, in order to calm and console the seeker or to display his own servitude, Hadrat would – in emulation of the pious predecessors – teach the seeker a few *wazā'if ma'thūrah* (*wazīfahs* which are established from the Qur'ān and Hadīth), write down *nuqūsh* and *ta'wīdhāt* which have been passed on through the generations, and hand them over to the needy person. However, because his love for the Sunnah had been firmly embedded in his veins and nerves, he would generally [only] teach the *wazīfahs* which have been mentioned in the Hadīth.

The only thing we can say about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's *nuqūsh* and *ta'wīdhāt* is that they were results of his *karāmat*.

A poet says:

*A man of perfection possesses the elixir
which is capable of converting metals into gold.
He picks up a pinch of sand
and turns it into gold.*

Maulwī Ya'sūb ad-Dīn Sāhib used to relate: "One of my friends was also one of Hadrat's *khādims*. He had proposed to a girl who was strikingly beautiful. He fell passionately in love with her – even before the marriage. Some dispute arose amongst the relatives and this proposal was nullified. The moment it was nullified, his condition changed completely. He went to consult with different people, followed their instructions, read whatever they told him to read and did whatever they told him to do, but none of this helped in the least.

He had reached the end of his tether and thus, as a last resort, he went to Gangoh. He cried in front of Hadrat and said: 'Hadrat, I was too ashamed to say anything, but now I have lost all hope in life. I have no alternative but to speak to you.' He then related his story and his condition. Hadrat – as was his habit – said: 'Bhāi, I do not know any '*amalīyyāt*.' He started crying again and insisted that Hadrat should write something for him. Hadrat then wrote something down and told him to tie it around his arm. [The *khādim*] took the *ta'wīdh*, returned to his hometown and tied it around his arm.

Look at Allāh's Power! That very same week, the mutual dispute was resolved and the girl's family automatically agreed to the marriage. In fact, they insisted that it should be contracted immediately. The *nikāh* was performed immediately, and the girl was sent off to the boy's house that same day.

People were astounded at how swiftly the tables had turned. After much pondering, they concluded that he must have gone to Gangoh

and that he must have returned home with a powerful *ta'wīdh*. His friends insisted that he should take it off and show it to them so that they could copy it. He refused, but they did not relent. They held him down, removed the *ta'wīdh* by force, opened it and found the following written in it: 'O Allāh! I do not know anything and he is not listening to me. He is Your servant and slave. You know best what to do.'"

Allāh ﷻ had endowed Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's blessed hands with a peculiar quality of acceptance – something which is normally found in a broken-hearted, oppressed person and on the tongue of a person who has lost hope in everything apart from Allāh ﷻ – a person whose supplication is certain to be accepted.

*Fear the sigh and supplication of the oppressed!
It always has permission
to enter at the Door of Truth (Allāh).*

Many calamity-stricken, devastated, anxious and terminally ill people had made Hadrat's *du'ā* their shield and medication. Since his position of servitude demanded general acceptance, his [*ta'wīdh*] was merely used as a excuse. Allāh ﷻ had destined success for him since eternity. Therefore, why is it necessary that any of us should know what he wrote [in the *ta'wīdh*] which he gave to those who sought his help? How will we ever know whether the fulfilment of the objective was through the written word, or whether it was through the person [Hadrat] who wrote it?

Hāfiz Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hāfiz Sāhib, a trader from Bombay, fell ill at the age of five or six years. He would get epileptic fits and his condition gradually regressed to the such an extent that he would remain unconscious for two hours at a time. His mouth would remain clenched and froth would emanate from it. For ten years the Unānī physicians treated him. He was taken to various people for *ta'wīdh* and other treatment. Whatever anyone suggested was tried,

but it did not alleviate his illness in the least.

His brother Hāfiz 'Abdullāh Sāhib Muhājir had pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat. When they had lost all hope of [receiving] relief from the various treatments, Hāfiz 'Abdullāh Sāhib Muhājir brought his brother to Gangoh. He described his brother's entire condition to Hadrat and asked him for a *ta'wīdh*. Hadrat gave him a few *ta'wīdh* which he had to drink.⁴⁵ Sixteen years have passed since that incident. After using the *ta'wīdh*, he never experienced any epileptic fits again. *Mā shā' Allāh*, he is currently a healthy man. In fact, he is quite robust and strong.

'Abd al-Hamīd Khān Sāhib relates: "About sixteen years ago, I bought sweetmeats while on my way home. There was a mango tree at the edge of a drain. It was popularly believed that the effects of the jinn were on this tree. I had to pass that way. As I came closer to the tree, my eyes fell on a black dog. It stood watching me for quite some time. I mustered the courage to proceed, passed it and reached home [safely].

The moment I arrived at home, I suddenly felt a severe and unbearable pain in my knee. While in this pain, I developed a fever which left me delirious for ten to twelve days. This was followed by hectic fever⁴⁶ which lasted for about two years. During this time, I used to have many bad dreams, and sometimes I would see that same black dog (which I had seen under the tree) attacking me. I did whatever I could to cure my illness, but nothing helped. Eventually I wrote to Hadrat, described my condition in detail to

⁴⁵ Certain verses, Names of Allāh ۞ etc. are normally written with saffron on plates. Water is swilled around in the plate, and the patient is made to drink the water. Alternatively, verses, Names of Allāh ۞ etc. are read and blown into the water and the patient is made to drink it.

⁴⁶ 'Hectic fever' is fever that recurs daily with profound sweating, chills and facial flush.

him and asked him for a *ta'wīdh*. Hadrat wrote something, folded it, placed it in an envelope and sent it to me. He instructed me to tie it around my arm. By Allāh's Grace, the moment I tied the *ta'wīdh* around my arm, the hectic fever disappeared and I did not have any more bad dreams."

The effect which Allāh ﷻ had placed in Hadrat's *aurād*, *wazā'if*, *ta'wīdhāt* and *nuqūsh* was by and large the result of his acceptance in Allāh's Sight and his servitude to Him. Thus, no matter how quick and strong the effect may have been, it was not surprising in the least [it was expected to be such]. Hadrat had made his external self, internal self, heart and body completely subservient, obedient and devoted to Allāh ﷻ. Thus, based on the principle ...

مَنْ كَانَ لِلَّهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ لَهُ

*"When a person dedicates himself solely to Allāh ﷻ,
Allāh ﷻ dedicates Himself to him."*

... the Appreciative Allāh had rewarded him. [Allāh ﷻ] made him a refuge and sanctuary for the creation. His unseen mediation would often be sufficient for the fulfilment of people's needs, and his blessed connection with Allāh ﷻ would serve as a guarantee for the success of the afflicted souls and for the realization of their objectives.

There was a time when a plague afflicted the region and its disastrous effects devastated town after town. The distress and anxiety which the people experienced was beyond description. Those who were suffering from this incurable disease, as well as those who nursed them, had lost all hope. They either requested Hadrat's *du'ā'*, or [they would] merely mention him as a link (*wasīlah*) in their own *du'ā'*, and they would experience astonishing and unexpected success.

Maulwī Aẖmad Sāhib Sūrtī was spending time with Hadrat for the purpose of *dhikr wa shughl* (remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and other spiritual practices), when he received the news from home that several of his family members had passed away due to the plague, and that his sister was now suffering from the same illness. This staggering news terrified him. He went to Hadrat and requested his *du'ā'*. Hadrat promised to make *du'ā'* and said: "Do not worry, *inshā Allāh*, she will be cured." The Maulwī Sāhib remained in Gangoh and a few days later he received the news of his sister's complete recovery.

There was a time when a plague started spreading from Lahore, Amritsar, Jālandhar and other places towards this region [western U.P.] and it reached Ambālah. The people of Sahāranpūr became very concerned because Sahāranpūr was next in line. However, merely worrying about something does not solve the problem. A few people presented themselves in Allāh's Court and beseeched Him saying: "O the One Who created us and the One Who has the Power to destroy us! Powerless sinners like us do not even have the ability to offer a *du'ā'* which is worthy of acceptance. We acknowledge that we are being punished for our sins. However, there is in our midst one of Your accepted servants by the name of Maulānā Rashīd Aẖmad. We make him our intercessor and beg You to protect us against this calamity, and we ask You to save our town from this plague by virtue of this holy man who is a refuge for the people."

The plague spread from Ambālah to Muzaffarnagar and from there to Meerut. Although Sahāranpūr was situated inbetween [these two towns], not a single death occurred in Sahāranpūr for as long as Hadrat was alive. These were places where neither Hadrat's written *ta'wīdh* had reached, nor were his *wazīfs* ever read, yet the people were still able to achieve their objective. Such incidents support my claim that the effect of that which he had written was achieved by virtue of his spiritual strength, while his writing was

merely an outward excuse.

Nonetheless, the *aurād* (things to be recited) and *nugūsh* (drawings) which have been verified to have come from him – either verbally or in writing – are not devoid of benefit. On the contrary, it would not be incorrect to assume that they are powerful and effective by virtue of their affiliation to him. That is why I consider it appropriate to include a certain amount thereof in this biography.

Hājī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khān Panjlāswī Marhūm went through a period of intense pain and frustrations. This caused him to lose all hope in life. He was going through a period of poverty and was overpowered by debt. He had become the target of his enemies. Due to this, he suffered numerous difficulties and they treated him with great hostility. He had to face a new obstacle with each new day. He even stopped attending the *jumu'ah salāh* in Jāmi‘ Musjid because there was a serious threat to his life.

When his opponents saw that he had resorted to remaining indoors in order to save his life, they decided to perform black magic against him. Under these bleak circumstances he wrote to Hadrat. Hadrat sent him a reply which we shall now quote verbatim:

Repelling black magic, settling debts and removing worries:

“Respected Khān Sāhib. As-salāmu ‘alaykum. Read this carefully. You must adopt the obvious and outward measures, because this world of cause and effect is based upon outward measures.

Read *حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ* 500 times daily during the course of the day.

Read *Qul A'ūdhu bi rabbil falaq* [Sūrah al-Falaq] and *Qul A'ūdhu bi rabbīn nās* [Sūrah an-Nās] three times each, as well as Āyatul

Qursī, once only, when you retire to bed. After reading these, blow on your hands and pass your hands over your entire body. Read them after the *fajr* and *maghrib ṣalāh* as well. *Inshā Allāh*, no one's black magic and plotting will harm you.

Engage in abundant *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness) because Allāh ﷻ promises the settlement of debts, the removal of worries and the realization of one's objectives through *istighfār*. Remember one thing – do not mention your secret affairs to anyone, thinking that person to be your friend. This is essential. We cannot trust anyone. Was salām.”

During that same period, the Khān Sāhib received another letter in which the following was mentioned:

Read the *du'ā'*:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

“I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allāh ﷻ against the evil which He has created.”

Read this three times morning and evening with the intention of repelling black magic.

Read the *Qul yā* [Sūrah al-Kāfirūn], *Qul huwallāh* [Sūrah al-Ikhlās], *Qul A'ūdhu bi rabbil falaq* [Sūrah al-Falaq], *Qul A'ūdhu bi rabbīn nās* [Sūrah an-Nās], Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and Āyatul Kursī one time each in the morning and evening. Then blow on your hands and pass them over your entire body.

If possible, set aside some time to read the *Hizb al-Bahr*. It is not essential to read it. If you cannot read it, at least read the first two which I have mentioned...”

Removal of worries and success in court cases:

If a worker has been dismissed, an innocent person has been accused of a crime, a court case has been instituted against a person, or any other similar problem has been experienced, Hadrat [always] advised the person to read the following:

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

[He should read it] 500 times after '*ishā*', upon retiring to bed. If he is unable to read it at this specific time, he may read it at any other time during the day or night. If he cannot read all 500 in one sitting, he may spread it out and read [at intervals] during the course of the day. After this recitation the person must make a *du'ā*'. If, for any reason, he cannot read it 500 times, he must at least read it 100 times.

Whenever a person experienced a very severe difficulty, Hadrat would not specify any number. He would ask him to read it as many times as he could – while he was engaged in his work, while walking around, while lying down, with *wudū*' or without *wudū*' and so forth. Countless people practised on this advice and their problems were always solved.

Removal of poverty:

Hadrat would advise a person who was experiencing poverty and bankruptcy to read *Yā Bāsiṭu* 1,100 times after '*ishā*'. The person must read *durūd sharīf* eleven times before and after the recitation of *Yā Bāsiṭu*. This is effective for the settlement of debts and expansion in sustenance.

Strengthening the eyesight:

Whenever a person's eyesight was weak, Hadrat would advise him

to write the word **الله** on a piece of paper or on a board. It should be written in the *nuskh* font, in large and bold letters. The person should then look at the word with full concentration. *Inshā Allāh*, his eyesight will be strengthened and his sight will improve.

When the husband is displeased:

Whenever a husband was displeased with his wife and was not showing any attention to her, Hadrat would advise her to read the following when it is cool – either early in the morning or at night:

Eleven times *durūd sharīf*, 100 times *Qul huwallāh* [Sūrah al-Ikhlās], followed by eleven times *durūd sharīf*. She should then make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ.

An infertile woman:

There was a woman who could not bear children. Hadrat asked for two eggs. Then he asked for them to be boiled and removed the shell. On the one egg he wrote this verse:

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ

And on the other egg he wrote the following verse:

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ

He then gave both eggs to the husband and told him that he should eat the first egg, while his wife should eat the second egg. They should both eat [the eggs] after the wife has [performed *ghusl* on the day of the completion of] her menses.

A woman who aborts/miscarries:

If a woman constantly aborted or miscarried, Hadrat would read Sūrah ash-Shāms forty times over *ajwā'in* (caraway) and pepper seeds and blow on them. He then gave it to the woman and asked her to eat the seeds regularly from the beginning of her pregnancy. He added: "*Inshā Allāh*, there is hope that your children will be blessed with long lives."

Labour pain:

If a woman experienced severe labour pain, Hadrat would write the following on a piece of paper, which should then be tied around her thigh and removed the moment the child is born. If it is not removed immediately, there is the possibility that her intestines [uterus] will also coming out.

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ

Epilepsy in children:

If a child suffered from epilepsy, Hadrat would take eleven threads of blue cotton, tie forty-one knots in it, and read Sūrah al-Fātiḥah together with *Bismillāh*... once on each knot [totalling forty-one times]. He would then instruct the parent to tie this thread around the child's neck.

Mischief of enemies:

On one occasion Hadrat advised reading *Bismillāh*... 800 times after the *fajr ṣalāh* and *Yā 'Azīzu* an unspecified number of times. [This is] for protection against the mischief of your enemies and for having a merciful ruler appointed over yourself.

For fulfilment of your objectives:

For the fulfilment of objectives and for experiencing tranquillity in the heart Hadrat advised a person to read the following *du'ā'* 300 times:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

He should also read *durūd sharīf* three, five or seven times before and after this *du'ā'*.

Hectic fever:

Hadrat advised a person who was suffering from hectic fever as follows:

Write *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, together with *Bismillāh*... on a white plate. Pour goat's milk onto [the plate] and swirl it around. The sick person must be made to drink it first thing in the morning. If Allāh ﷻ Wills, he will be cured.

General illnesses:

For general illnesses – especially those which doctors have failed to cure – Hadrat would advise writing *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, together with *Bismillāh*... on a plate. Water should be swirled over the writing and, for forty consecutive days, the person should drink the water in the morning. He also advised writing the following words after *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*:

يَا حَيُّ حَيِّنْ لَا حَيَّ فِي دِيْمُومَةٍ مُلْكِهِ وَبَقَائِهِ يَا حَيُّ

Immorality and any illness:

The fact that *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is a means to cure has been established from the *Aḥādīth*. That is why Hadrat used to say that

its benefit covers all illnesses. So much so, that it is even beneficial for cases of immorality and ill-manneredness if it is written on paper [and placed inside a container of water], or on a plate [on which water is then swirled] and the water is consumed. It is beneficial for pimples, boils, wounds, diarrhoea, fever, trembling – in short, it is beneficial for every ailment.

Maulwī Sirāj Aẖmad Sāhib had swelling in his right leg. The swelling caused him excruciating pain, making it difficult for him to sit up or to stand. [When Hadrat received his letter], he wrote the following reply: “While you are lying down in your condition of illness, you must continue reciting Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and blow on the place [which is affected]. You must also blow over yourself. Continue making *du'ā'* for a good death for me, for I am in need of your *du'ā'*. Any *du'ā'* which is made during an illness is accepted. I am convinced that you will be cured from this illness.”

Evil spirits:

Whenever a person was afflicted by evil spirits, Hadrat would advise the writing of the names of the *As-hāb-e-Kahf* as follows:

The names should be written on pieces of paper and stuck in various places on the walls of the place in which the afflicted person lives. Furthermore, the diagram below must be written on a piece of paper and shown to the sick person. The person will become scared and refuse to look at it, but he must be forced to look at it. The drawing [diagram] must also be made into a *ta'wīdh* and placed around the afflicted person's neck by force.

The names of the *As-hāb-e-Kahf* are as follows:

إِلَهِی بِحُرْمَةِ یَمَلِیْخَا مَكْسَلَمِیْنَا كَشْفُوط طَبِیُّوْنَسْ كَشَافَطِیُّوْنَسْ اَدْرِفَطِیُّوْنَسْ
یُوَاسُّ یُوْسُ وَكَلْبُهُمْ قِطْمِیْزٌ وَ عَلٰی اِلَهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِیْلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِزٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ

لَهْدُكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَبَارَكَ
وَسَلَّمَ.

The diagram is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٨	٢	٢	٢
٢	٢	٢	٨
٢	٨	٢	٢
٢	٢	٨	٢

Love:

Hadrat taught the following 'amal for love:

*Bismillāh ṣallallāh pīsar Muḥammad hāt tel mūnh chīknā bethū sar
dhāu thak bāndhū thākar bāndhū bāndhū sagar ugāmū mīrān jaman
jittī yūn kahīn man mauhan merā nāu bi ḥaqq Lā ilāha illallāhu
Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu alayhi wa sallam.*

The above must be read 41 times and blown over 'itr. The 'itr must be applied on the nails of both thumbs and then applied onto the eyebrows [with the thumb nails]. The person may then appear before his quest. *Inshā Allāh*, love will develop in his or her heart.

During the days when Hadrat was imprisoned in Muzaffarnagar, a fellow prisoner was extremely worried and anxious. Hadrat read the above and gave it to him. He was summoned to court the following

day and, by Allāh's Grace, he was freed.

The above '*amal*' is also related from Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, but it [his version] contains the words: "*Bismillāh pīsar Muḥammad ṣallallāh*". Furthermore, before the person goes before his quest, he should apply '*itr*' on his eyebrows and read:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

Allāh ﷻ knows best.



This world is a serious tribulation and its love is so deceptive that many intelligent people are deceived and deluded by it – despite its temporary and fleeting nature. When Shayṭān sets out to destroy the righteous servants of Allāh ﷻ, he generally attacks them behind the veil of '*amalīyyāt*' and conveys them far away from their real objective [Allāh ﷻ]. That is why Hadrat Imām Rabbānī neither involved himself in this deception, nor did he permit his spiritual children to get involved in it. If '*amalīyyāt*' were discussed, he would make a short statement. At the same time, he would try to remove any interest in this field from their hearts.

Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib related: "My father used to write *ta'wīdh* and give it to the people. After he passed away, people started pestering me and asking me for *ta'wīdh*." [Upon hearing about this] Hadrat said: "So give them." He continued: "But I do not know anything in this regard."

Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib actually only wanted Hadrat to give him permission for '*amalīyyāt*' so that it would be of more benefit. Hadrat said: "At the time when they ask you, write down whatever comes to mind and give it to them. If it benefits them, you will be rewarded. If it does not benefit them, they will stop asking

you.”

This is what you call the essence of the art of *ta'wīdh* in its balanced form. However, it is difficult to remain steadfast in [practice, and to maintain such] equilibrium and balance. In the case where a person benefits people, he [inevitably] hears their praises and this results in pride. This increases his love for position because the person enjoys it when people constantly refer to him. This is the reason why he experiences disappointment and regret when people do not benefit from him [his '*amalīyyāt*'].

It is essential to first rectify and reform the *nafs*. When the *nafs* is controlled and the person is saved from love for fame and status, then – with the intention of serving humanity – the mere writing of Allāh's Name and giving it as a *ta'wīdh* is akin to prescribing medication and making *du'ā'*. In such a case, it becomes a good and righteous deed. However, if a person enters into this field without first rectifying his *nafs*, the deception of serving humanity becomes a cause of deterioration of his *nafs* and a worsening of the person's condition.

Thus, ever since Hadrat Imām Rabbānī became Rasūlullāh's ۞ deputy, assumed the responsibility of directing and tutoring the *ummah* of Muḥammad ۞, and embraced them [the *ummah*] with his love and affection, he always safeguarded himself against falling into this dangerous occupation.

After explaining to Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib the purpose behind the art of *ta'wīdh* [as mentioned above], he said to him: “It is not good to get too involved in the art of *ta'wīdh*. A person can easily be diverted from his actual objective.” Hadrat then related his own story: “In the beginning I had a lot of interest in the art of *ta'wīdh*. Once a person asked me for a *ta'wīdh*. I had a book in my house which had been passed down from my forefathers [through every successive generation]. I jotted something down from it and

gave it to the person. By Allāh's Power, his objective was realized that same day. After he achieved success, he related his condition to me and I learnt from him that he had had an affair with a woman. Upon hearing this, I really regretted giving him the *ta'wīdh*. I immediately went home and burnt the book out of fear that I might [be tempted to] use it for an impermissible purpose."

The lofty and elevated status of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's natural thoughts becomes evident through the abovementioned statement. This can only be understood by a mature person. An immature youth, like myself, would only remark that Hadrat's enthusiasm for this art [of *ta'wīdh* and '*amalīyyāt*'] has not been established. Therefore, it cannot be expressed in a way that would fully satisfy the reader and make it possible for him to accurately preserve it.

This chapter was included in this biography solely to prevent any future accusation of defect, although several reasons warranted its exclusion. Furthermore, it is worthy of noting that this art does have some benefit – [but only] after the the 'self' has been rectified and firmness in *īmān* has been established.

A few practices were presented to the reader. I pray to Allāh ﷻ that they will remain on the level which Allāh ﷻ had intended, and as it has been explained by the *Ahlullāh*. If this is not done and a person allows himself to get caught up in this art, he will lose sight of his actual objective and he will be deprived of the Pleasure of his True Master [Allāh ﷻ]. [Without doubt] it will cause him to fall into a destructive trade. One should not have to seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ against becoming immersed in it. There is no need to seek refuge in Him if one pays no attention to it.

Maulwī Nazar Muḥammad Khān Sāhib once asked: "Hadrat, I have many enemies and they are all thirsty for my blood. Teach me to read something so that they are subjugated and humiliated." Hadrat replied: "Why do you need to subjugate and humiliate anyone?"

practice (*ma'mūl*). Due to his complete submission [to Allāh ﷻ], Hadrat had become totally attached to the Qur'ān which Allāh ﷻ had revealed, and the *du'ā's* and *adhkār* which had emanated from the blessed mouth of Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Because of this, he never allowed himself to pay attention to anything else. If any *khādim* sought permission for a *hizb* or *wird*, he would permit him in a manner which was appropriate to the condition of the person. Consequently, countless *khādims* obtained his permission for *hishn-e-hasīn*, *hizb al-bahr*, *hizb al-a'zam*, *salāt-e-tunjīnā* etc.

On one occasion, a student excused himself from his studies in Pānīpat and came to Gangoh to obtain Hadrat's permission for *hizb al-bahr*. Hadrat did not like the fact that the student was attaching so much importance to a *hizb* that he was willing to miss his Hadīth lessons in order to undertake a journey for this purpose. He clearly expressed his disapproval of this. However, he granted him permission and added: "I have obtained permission for *hizb al-bahr* as well, but I do not read it." Maulwī Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib was present in the same assembly [at the time], and he also sought permission for *hizb al-bahr*. Hadrat gave him permission as well.

From amongst the *ahzāb* (plural of *hizb*), Hadrat had an affinity for the *hizb al-a'zam*. This was because it is a collection of the *du'ā's* of the Qur'ān and Ahādīth. Hadrat did not like the words of some *ahzāb*. On one occasion he said: "Some *awrād* contain the words: *بعدد معلوم لك* (*equal to the number known to You*). I do not approve of these words because they create the impression that there is a restriction in Allāh's Knowledge."

Hadrat was never miserly in giving permission for *ahzāb* and *aurād*. However, because he had a natural affinity and love for the Sunnah, he felt as disinclined towards the *ahzāb* as he felt towards *'amalīyyāt*, because total engrossment in them only results in an inattention towards the recitation of the Qur'ān and the study of the Ahādīth.

On one occasion Hadrat said: "Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had given me permission for *durūd-e-tunjīnā* which could be read 1000 times in one assembly for the fulfilment of important needs. We read it a few times for the fulfilment of certain important needs, and Allāh ﷻ fulfilled our needs." Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib had given us permission to read it with a *sukūn* (*sākin/jazm*) on the ن (*nūn*), while [he, most probably, mentioned the name of Shaykh Makhdūm Bakhsh Rāmpūrī *rahimahullāh*] had given permission for the *nūn* to be read with *tashdīd*. Hadrat then addressed all those who were present, saying: "I grant permission for it to all of you."

Hadrat used to grant permission for *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* to his *khādims* with the following *sanad* (chain of transmission):

عن الشيخ مخدوم بخش رامپوري عن الشيخ الدلايل الشيخ عبد الرحمن المدني إلى آخر السند.

On one occasion, he gave permission for *Dalā'il* to his *khādims* with the following *wird*:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوةً تُكُونُ لَكَ رِضًى وَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ وَلِحَقِّهِ أَدَاءٌ، أَعْطِهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالْفَضِيلَةَ وَالْمَقَامَ الْمَحْمُودَ الَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ وَاجْزِهِ عَنَّا مَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَاجْزِهِ أَفْضَلَ مَا جَازَيْتَ نَبِيًّا عَنْ قَوْمِهِ وَرَسُولًا عَنْ أُمَّتِهِ وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ إِخْوَانِهِ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

This is a source of blessings if it is read seven times on a Friday.

GLAD TIDINGS AND TESTIMONIES

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's had gained status as a leader of the Muslims on the basis of his total adherence to the Sharī'ah and his steadfastness in *Dīn*. This had become so obvious that it was

impossible for anyone who was affiliated to him to deviate and go astray. The fact that he was *mustajāb ad-da'wāt* (one whose *du'ā's* are readily accepted) and a refuge and sanctuary to Allāh's Creation was sufficient to demonstrate his lofty rank, high status, sanctity and proximity to Allāh ﷻ. His *du'ā'*-giving tongue which was protected by Allāh ﷻ constantly affirmed his *wilāyat* (close friendship with Allāh ﷻ) and his ardent worship of Allāh ﷻ. His affectionate nature and *tawassul* (acting as intermediary) – through which the needs of thousands of people were met – was a distinct sign of his acceptance [in Allāh's Sight] and of being His beloved. In addition to this, his *karāmāt*, extraordinary feats, and *kashf*, further provided evidence of his intellectual and practical excellences.

Due to an abundance of clear evidence [regarding his superiority and outstanding features], no need exists for the establishment of any further proof thereof. However, his position – which demanded of him to see to the rectification of people – warrants a perfect and absolute display [of his excellent qualities]. Therefore, a presentation has also been made of the testimonies of the close servants of Allāh ﷻ, the senior elders of his time, narrations of glad tidings which were received through dreams, as well as recollections of actual events, in order to demonstrate his lofty status of *wilāyat* to his associates, and to the Muslims in general.

There is no doubt that he realized his objective the moment he presented himself in the Imdādīyyah court and that it spread to every part of his body. He then remained in solitude and anonymity and continued progressing with fortitude and determination. It [is this fortitude and determination that] became known to the world.

Just as there is great diversity amongst the temperaments, inclinations, bonds (*ia'alluq*), effects (*athar*) and results and achievements of the *ahl-e-haqq*, similarly, the inclinations, services and positions of the *ahl-e-irshād* (those occupied in instructing and

tutoring people) are equally diverse. Allāh ﷻ endows His servants with the appropriate capabilities to fulfil the service which He desires them to fulfil. The servant who has been chosen for a particular service, then fulfils it in accordance with the capabilities and means at his disposal.

Imām Rabbānī had attained the lofty rank of prophetic deputyship and rectifier of the [spiritual] conditions of people. It was therefore appropriate that his *wilāyat* should be made explicitly obvious, so that there could remain no room for doubt on the part of the masses and the elite. The fact that he was the proof of Allāh ﷻ on earth had to be clearly displayed to the world – as clear as the mid-day sun.

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ

“... so that he who is to perish might perish after clear evidence, and he who is to survive may survive after clear evidence.”

(Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 42)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] used to relate: “Once I thought to myself that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī’s *wilāyāt* and acceptance was obvious, but that the ranks of the *auliyā’* of Allāh are diverse. I wondered what Hadrat’s rank was? I was lying down one day when I dozed off. I woke up and dozed off again. Then I saw Hadrat in the Musjid. I was sitting in front of him. A *buzurg* entered [the Musjid] with a walking stick in his hand. He pointed towards Hadrat and addressed me saying: ‘Listen, this is the *Qutb al-irshād* (the axis or pivot of rectitude).’ My eyes opened immediately thereafter and my heart experienced tranquillity.”

After Hadrat’s demise, Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī] had a dream in which he mentioned Hadrat’s name during some occasion, adding ‘*rahmatullāhi*’ *alayh* afterwards. Someone said to him: “No, you must say: *quddisa sirruhu* or *qaddasallāhu sirrahu* (may Allāh ﷻ sanctify his inner self).” Maulānā [Thānwī] interpreted this dream

himself, saying: "This does not mean that it is prohibited to say *rahmatullāhi 'alayh*, or that *rahmatullāhi 'alayh* is inferior in meaning to *quddisa sirruhu*. However, there are times when certain words and phrases of similar meaning have specific meanings, depending on the context. This is why *sallallāh 'alayhi wa sallam* is used for none other than the Prophets ﷺ and the phrase *radiyallāhu 'anhu* is only used for the *Sahābah* (salaf). In like manner, *rahmatullāhi 'alayh* is presently and generally used for the *sulahā*' (the pious and righteous people) and *quddisa sirruhu* is used for the senior *auliyā*'. The purpose of this dream was to draw our attention to the fact that *Hadrat Maulānā* [Gangohī] enjoyed this rank [of being amongst the senior *auliyā*]. And Allāh ﷻ knows best."

Once, *Hadrat Maulānā 'Azīz ar-Rahmān Sāhib Mujaddidī* Naqshbandī went to Sirhind to visit the grave of *Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī*. He was informed [probably through *kashf*] that *Imām Rabbānī Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib* was the *Qutb al-irshād*.

Hadrat Maulānā Siddīq Ahmad Sāhib Ambhetwī is from amongst *Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's* senior *khulafā*' and a personality who enjoys extraordinary conditions and unique experiences. He writes: "I have been informed that *Hadrat quddisa sirruhu* was the *Qutb al-irshād* of this era. His title in the Hereafter is *makhdūm al-'ālam* (the one who is served by the world). He is firmly established in *wilāyatun nubūwwah wa maqām-e-Muhammadi* (close affinity and proximity to *Muhammad* ﷺ). There are very few from the *ummah* of *Muhammad* ﷺ who are as firmly established in this lofty position. This position is linked to that of *Hadrat Rasūlullāh* ﷺ.

The quality of *'abdiyyat* (servitude) is the overriding quality in attaining this position. Due to his personal, perpetual cognition of Allāh ﷻ, a person who enjoys such a position never attributes any excellence to himself. On the contrary, he attributes every personal excellence to Allāh ﷻ. As for human defects, which are

intrinsically part and parcel of man ... he attributes these only to himself, feels extremely ashamed of them, and thus becomes the embodiment of humility and reliance [upon Allāh ﷻ]. The more firmly established a person becomes in this lofty position, the more he will consider himself to be worthless, sinful and needy."

When Maulānā Mukhlis ar-Rahmān Sāhib Bengālī completed his studies in Deoband, he came to Gangoh and said to Hadrat: "I have two intentions. Firstly, [I intend] to pledge *bay'ah* to Hadrat and engage in *dhikr shughl* and, secondly, [I intend] to memorize the Qur'ān. I will now do as Hadrat instructs me." Hadrat replied: "Memorize the Qur'ān first and we will see thereafter."

Acting upon this advice, Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Rahmān Sāhib went to Pānīpat. He strove for two years and completed the memorization of the Qur'ān. Thereafter it was his desire to return to Gangoh to fulfil his other intention, but he did not have sufficient money for the journey. He borrowed ten rupees and presented himself before Hadrat.

It had been quite some time since he had left home [present day Bangladesh], so he thought to himself that he would learn some *dhikr shughl* from Hadrat, remain in his company for two months and then return home [to Bangladesh]. However, upon arriving in Gangoh, Hadrat accepted his *bay'ah* in an ordinary manner and did not initiate him into any *dhikr* or *shughl*.

Several months passed in this way. He became restless and thought to himself: 'I intended to stay here for only two months and to return home thereafter. Several months have now passed, and I have not even been taught any *dhikr*. It looks as if I will spend my entire life here.'

After these thoughts entered his mind, he experienced whisperings that he should go elsewhere [to another Shaykh]. He started asking

people if there was any other *buzurg* in this area where he could fulfil his objective. After several enquiries he heard about a famous *buzurg* in Pīlīphat. He reckoned that he might be able to realize his objective quickly if he should go there, and then he would be able to [return home]. When he received this information he became very happy, and wrote a letter to Maulānā Shabbīr Muḥammad Sāhib rahimahullāh in which he described his story in detail, but the letter could not be sent immediately because the post [for that day] had already been collected.

Then Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Raḥmān fell asleep. He had a dream in which a *buzurg* was addressing him: "Mukhlis ar-Raḥmān! Where do you think you are heading by leaving the Quṭb of this era?" His eyes opened suddenly, his condition changed instantly, and he experienced a desire to remain in Gangoh – even if it meant that he had to do so for the rest of his life.

A sincere quest (*ṭalab-e-sādiq*) had now been realized and thus Allāh ﷻ guided him. He developed conviction in his determination and his intention started to materialize. The influence and attention of the Shaykh, who was the physician of the *ummah*, steered him. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī summoned him that very same day and taught him loud *dhikr*.

After engaging in *dhikr* on that first day, Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Raḥmān fell asleep. He had a dream in which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī placed his blessed mouth over his mouth, whereupon the word 'Allāh' emanated with full force from Maulwī Mukhlis ar-Raḥmān's heart – similar to the force with which a sound emanates from a camel. After the dream his eyes opened. That morning he related the dream to Hadrat, and Hadrat said: "*Bārakallāh!* (May Allāh bless you). The effect of *dhikr* has commenced in your heart." Hadrat then taught him *pās anfās*.

One day he was lying down in the *khānqāh*, engrossed in *shughl*

(spiritual practice). He fell into a slumber and saw Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh* approaching. As he was walking by, he addressed him saying: "Listen! You must ask Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad for whatever you want."

Maulwī Aḥmad Sāhib was a resident of Simlak, district Surat. During his student days in Deoband, he felt an urge to engage in Allāh's *dhikr*. He was a young, righteous person who used to have many good dreams. He gauged from his dreams that he should go to Gangoh where he would learn how to engage in Allāh's remembrance. However, he was aware of Hadrat's habit of not initiating a student as a *murīd* and could not muster the courage to make such a request. He was still worrying about this one night, when he had a dream: He found himself in a large orchard with many fruit-bearing trees. The orchard was known as Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib's orchard. He saw himself entering the orchard, plucking a few guavas and eating them.

His eyes suddenly opened, and he realized that – *inshā Allāh* – he will not be deprived of Hadrat's bestowal and blessings. At the end of Sha'bān he went to Gangoh and requested *bay'ah*. Hadrat [immediately] accepted, but he did not instruct him to engage in any *dhikr*. He merely said: "If you remain here, I will teach you a bit. If not, I will not [teach you anything]." It had been quite some time since he had left home and he was really desirous of visiting his mother. Due to these circumstances, he did not remain in the *khānqāh*. He merely pledged *bay'ah*, received Hadrat's permission to leave, and returned to his hometown.

Although he had only pledged *bay'ah*, he was not deprived of Hadrat's influences and blessings nor from the benefits of his attention. He developed an intense fear of Allāh ﷻ and submission to Him – something which had not been present during his student days. He developed a firm consciousness of *ṣalāh* – never allowing himself to miss a [single] *ṣalāh*. He experienced an awareness in his

heart which urged him towards acts of obedience and caused him to give preference to obtaining Allāh's Pleasure over all other desires. However, he still had a few books on the rational sciences [logic and philosophy] which he had to complete.

He was concerned about completing these [books] and therefore decided to proceed to Taunk [for this purpose]. Consequently he became engrossed in logic and philosophy. On the eighth or ninth day [after his arrival in Taunk] he had a dream: He saw a huge ocean before him. He crossed it in a single moment and found Hadrat Maulānā standing on the other side, calling him. When his eyes opened, he experienced a terror and restlessness in his heart. He left Taunk and went to Deoband where he remained for one year and completed his remaining books. He then returned to Gangoh, commenced *dhikr shughl*, and started enjoying its benefits. Unfortunately, Hadrat passed away a few months later. Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib remained in the *khānqāh* for just nine months before he had to return home.

He certainly went to Gangoh when Hadrat Imām Rabbānī called him, but he went late. It took him one year to complete his studies in the rational sciences. He had many dreams during this one year that made it quite clear to him that he should make the best of the time available to him and hasten to Gangoh. However, that which is written in one's fate cannot be changed or altered. Allāh's ﷻ Will supercedes everything and that which was written in his destiny came to pass. Nevertheless, he was not deprived of Hadrat's blessings and influences.

Many of his close relatives passed away during that one year and he received information regarding them while he was in Deoband. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, despite this, he did not become restless and impatient. He spent the entire year devoted to completing his studies, after which he spent nine months in Gangoh. Many of his relatives died in a plague. Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib saw many of them in his dreams

and they appeared very happy and content. They advised him: "Ahmad, go quickly to Hadrat Maulānā in Gangoh and occupy yourself in *dhikr*. You will not get this opportunity again."

On one occasion he dreamt of his maternal aunt. She was a very pious, righteous and ascetic woman. She said to him: "Ahmad, you have merely become Hadrat Maulānā's *murīd*. You have not benefited much from this. You must go there and occupy yourself in *dhikr*. You will benefit tremendously. You will only derive the full benefit of becoming a *murīd* of such a Shaykh when you go to him and engage in *dhikr*."

On another occasion he saw a *buzurg* standing and addressing him directly: "It is far more beneficial, and much better for you, to go to Gangoh Sharīf and spend time with Hadrat Maulānā than to build a *madrasah* in Gujarat."

He used to experience clear and explicit dreams of this nature, but he continued with his studies [regardless], because he felt that he would not get the opportunity to complete his unfinished books later on. However, he rushed to complete the books quickly. Eventually he had another dream: There was a huge ocean between himself and Gangoh. He was standing on the shore with a few of his class mates and they were all thinking of crossing the ocean to reach Gangoh. He mustered the courage, stepped in and crossed it. There was a jāmūn tree (also known as Rose-apple or Java-plum) on the other side. His friends became occupied in eating the jāmūn, while he proceeded straight to Gangoh. He saw Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. He was seated, and his *khādims* and associates were sitting around him. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was vomiting in the direction of whichever *murīd* he turned his attention to. His eyes opened after this dream.

Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib wrote the entire dream down and sent it to the physician of the *ummah*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib

[Thānwī] for an interpretation. Hadrat Thānwī sent the following reply: "The ocean represents knowledge. You will cross it and reach Gangoh. Your class mates will remain engrossed in worldly engagements. *Inshā Allāh*, your internal evils will be removed. You saw this in the form of vomit coming out of the Shaykh's mouth. Hadrat's vomiting after turning his attention to the different *murīds* represents the removal of their internal evils through his [spiritual] attention and influence."

After this dream, Maulwī Aḥmad Sāhib eventually went to Gangoh and obtained Hadrat's permission to remain in the *khānqāh*. Hadrat said to him: "You must come to me in the evening. I will show you something. [That evening] after the *maghrib salāh* – before he could [even] go to Hadrat – Hadrat called for him and instructed him on how to engage in the *dhikr* of the twelve *tasbīhs*.

The very next day after commencing with this *dhikr*, he was blessed with the honour of seeing A'lā Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib in a dream. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was seated in a splendid court, in the presence of many '*ulamā*'. One of the '*ulamā*' took him to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib who then taught him how to engage in the *dhikr* of the twelve *tasbīhs*. His eyes opened soon thereafter. After this dream, he was fully convinced that Hadrat Maulānā's instruction was exactly the same as that of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib.

Due to his studies in philosophy, he had previously experienced many whisperings regarding the differences between Hadrat Maulānā and Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, but after this dream, these were all expelled. His stay at the *khānqāh* was now based purely on love and full confidence in Hadrat. He started experiencing a continuous downpour of tremendous blessings and bestowals.

During the course of his stay at the *khānqāh*, he had a dream in which he was in A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's presence. A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was teaching him *dhikr shughl*. Such dreams increased

his conviction that Hadrat's teachings were not in the least different from A'lā Hadrat's teachings and that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was the true deputy of A'lā Hadrat. The doubts which were preventing him from benefiting from Hadrat were removed and thus he was able to acquire whatever had been destined for him. *Al-hamdulillāh*, he surpassed numerous others.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*"This is the Grace of Allāh ﷻ
which He bestows on whomever He Wills."*

Munshī Rahmat 'Alī Sāhib, a teacher in the government *madrasah* of Rāipūr Gūjrān, district Jālandhar, was initially deeply immersed in evil *bid'āt* and fabricated customs. He came to Hadrat Hāfiz Muḥammad Sālih Sāhib and studied a few *masā'il* under him. Due to this, his beliefs were more or less rectified.

Since the beginning, Munshī Sāhib had special love and affection for Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. Consequently, he developed a very strong bond with the Shaykh. Whenever he had important issues to consider, the Shaykh would appear to him in his dreams and provide him with guidance. As a result of this love, he had the desire to pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of a Shaykh and to learn the methods of engaging in Allāh's *dhikr* – even during his time of ignorance.

During his studies under Hāfiz Muḥammad Sālih Sāhib, he constantly heard about the excellent qualities and merits of Hadrat Maulānā [Gangohī], but he was never impressed. He would think to himself: "I will never pledge *bay'ah* to anyone until Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr *rahimahullāh* appears to me in a dream and instructs me to pledge *bay'ah* to such and such a Shaykh."

Quite some time passed in this way. Eventually he was blessed with

seeing Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr in a dream. Hadrat Shaykh said to him: "In the present era, Allāh ﷻ has endowed Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī with such knowledge that, when any person comes to him and says *as-salāmu 'alaykum*, he knows the person's intention and instructs him to engage in *dhikr wa shughl* which is appropriate to him." His eyes opened and he experienced an inexplicable peace and tranquillity in his heart. However, he still did not feel a sufficient inclination to compel him to go to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī.

A few days later, he saw Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr in a dream for the second time – and then a third and a fourth time. He saw him for several days. Hadrat Pīrān-e-Pīr said to him: "Allāh ﷻ has bestowed Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib with both branches of knowledge [Sharī'ah and Tarīqah] in its entirety." Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was also shown to him in his dream and he was informed: "This is the person whom you have been repeatedly ordered to go to."

He had never met Hadrat Imām Rabbānī before. In 1902, when the Sessions Court⁴⁷ was established after the 'īd *salāh* in Delhi, he finally had the opportunity to go to Gangoh. When his eyes fell upon Hadrat's blessed face, he recognized him immediately as the person whom he had seen in his dream. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī also did not hesitate to accept his *bay'ah*. He initiated him into repentance and taught him some *dhikr wa shughl*. He asked Hadrat about *taṣawwur-e-Shaykh* (bringing an image of one's Shaykh into one's mind) and Hadrat said: "Our *mashā'ikh* have written that it eventually leads to *shirk* (polytheism). If a person is intelligent and of sound temperament and he engages in *taṣawwur-e-Shaykh*, then there is no objection to it."

Maulwī Sirāj Aḥmad Sāhib Gangohī was from amongst the

⁴⁷ This is a court of law which exists in many Commonwealth countries [British Colonies]. Also known as a District Court.

descendants of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. Instead of having good thoughts about Hadrat, he had many negative and evil thoughts about him, even though he had studied under Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and had spent many days in his service. The major reason for this was that he felt inclined towards 'urs and other similar baseless customs because of his *pīr zādagī* (being a descendant of a Shaykh), while Hadrat was opposed to such customs.

Maulwī Sirāj Ahmad Sāhib was searching for a Shaykh whom he could pledge *bay'ah* to. A person had arrived in Sahāranpūr. He did not adhere to the Sharī'ah and was very materialistic, yet the people flocked towards him in droves and considered him to be a *walī-e-kāmil* (perfect Shaykh). They were attracted to him because it was his habit to inform those who were seated near him of that which was in their hearts. Since the [ignorant] masses consider such feats to be the criterion of piety, countless people became his *murīds*. Maulwī Sirāj Ahmad Sāhib was also greatly impressed by this and requested *bay'ah*.

The Pīrjī knew that he was one of the descendants of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs and that he was one of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's students. It was thus an honour for him to initiate such a person as his *murīd*. He expressed his pleasure at this request and said: "I will accept your *bay'ah* when I come to Gangoh." He thought that he would be able to establish his influence over the other *pīr zāde* (descendants of the Shaykh) if he had to go to Gangoh and that his honour will increase because of it. He also thought that he would have an opportunity to display his superiority over Hadrat Maulānā [Gangohī], because he had succeeded in attracting Hadrat's special *khādim*, who had remained in his service for years.

A few days later, the Pīrjī went to Gangoh and sent a message to Maulwī Sirāj Ahmad, informing him of his arrival. The latter came happily to pledge *bay'ah*. The Pīrjī instructed him that he should

come to pledge *bay'ah* in the evening, but before the appointed time arrived, Maulwī Sirāj Aḥmad suddenly experienced a strange horror.

He tore his clothes open and ran out into the forest. For three days there was no sign of him. On the third day he experienced some relief from this lunacy, returned to Gangoh and proceeded to the Musjid where his Shāh Sāhib was staying. He collected the clothes which he had left behind and went straight back into the forest. He then proceeded to Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and expressed his desire to pledge *bay'ah*. Shāh Sāhib consoled him and said: "You must come to me after 'asr. *Inshā Allāh*, I will initiate you as a *murīd* then."

Maulwī Sirāj Aḥmad Sāhib returned to where he was staying and fell asleep. He had a dream in which his forefather, Quṭb al-'Ālam Ḥadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*, came to him, held him by his hand, took him to Ḥadrat Maulānā Gangohī and made him stand before him. He then turned to him and addressed him in an angry tone: "You unfortunate fellow! Why are you leaving your home and wandering about here and there?" His eyes flew open immediately thereafter. He went to Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib, but before he could relate his dream or condition to him, Shāh Sāhib looked at him and said in his Punjābī tongue: "Bhāi! Why are you wandering here and there? Go, go back to your hometown." Maulwī Sirāj Aḥmad Sāhib returned to Gangoh, pledged *bay'ah* to Ḥadrat and benefited as much as was destined for him.

There were not merely ten or twenty dreams of this nature, but countless. Incidents of this nature, and dreams bearing glad tidings provide much consolation and solace to people. Those who were blessed with Allāh's Mercy, were instilled with tranquillity through such dreams and, through these dreams, they were directed to Ḥadrat. All their prior doubts and misgivings, which were posing as barriers and obstacles, were removed and they were bestowed with

the greatest of benefits.

Amongst the many reasons why Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had such obvious success in presenting this valuable gift of rectifying the thoughts and actions of his associates within such a short space of time, the major reason was the fact that his associates had developed conviction in their Shaykh. By virtue of the tests that he put them through, they became steadfast in their quest (*talab*). This was followed by tranquillity of the heart, and thereafter their love for their Shaykh would be established. His associates would then be endowed with the quality of complete confidence in their Shaykh – which is actually the foundation and basis for deriving benefit [from one's Shaykh]. Through this bestowal [from Allāh ﷻ], Allāh's Grace and Kindness would guide the people in different ways. A major portion of this guidance was received through good dreams, which number in their thousands.

There was a very religious and righteous person in Punjab. He thought of pledging *bay'ah* and spent many days pondering over where he should go and whom he should pledge *bay'ah* to. One night he fell asleep while absorbed in these thoughts. He saw himself in the presence of Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ who said to him: "Go and pledge *bay'ah* to Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Hindī. At present, there is no one better than him." Thereupon his eyes opened.

He had heard about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and immediately made the intention of going to Gangoh. However, he was a poor man, and Gangoh was very far away. He did not have the means to undertake such a journey. Thus, he left it at that – without going. The following night he saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ again. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked him: "Why did you not go?" He replied: "O Rasūlullāh! I do not have the means to go." Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "You will get the means. Just proceed on your way." Upon hearing this, his eyes opened. He was at a loss as to what he should do. He could not ask anyone. He did not have the courage to take a loan from anyone and he did not

have any money of his own.

When the day dawned, he was still engrossed in these thoughts. An outsider arrived, gave him money for the journey, and departed. His family needed some money for the house, so he gave them some of the money [which he had received]. When he counted the money, he realized that it would not suffice for his journey. Thus, he did not leave on that day either. On the third night he saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ again. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to him: "Go! Depart! You will receive more along the way." Immediately his eyes flew open.

That morning he made preparations for his departure, placed his trust in Allāh ﷻ, and left. He had not yet reached Gangoh when he ran out of money. He met a person who gave him sufficient money to complete his journey. Eventually he reached Gangoh, pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat and became engrossed in *dhikr*. Since he had been sent by the great master [Rasūlullāh ﷺ], he benefited much faster than others in Hadrat's company.



Hadrat Imām Rabbānī personally had so many good dreams that we would need an entire catalogue to note them down. It was not in Hadrat's nature to relate these dreams to others, therefore no one will ever be able to estimate their number. In essence, it was the purity of his occupation which caused him to become averse to relating such dreams to his associates. His lofty status demanded of him to remain totally devoted to Allāh ﷻ and to turn his attention away from all other things. Nonetheless, during the course of his discussions, some of his dreams would become known. Even this was in emulation of the Sunnah and as a means of expressing Allāh's Favours (*tahdīth-e-ni'mat*) upon him with the intention of obtaining reward.

1. On one occasion Hadrat said: "I saw Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib

quddisa sirruhu in a dream. He was a very handsome and pleasant looking person. In my dream I asked him to give me some advice. He said: 'Get married.' I replied: 'Hadrat, I am not one to abandon the Sunnah.' But he said the same thing again. Then my eyes opened. I related this dream to Hadrat Murshidī Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib, but he did not provide me with any interpretation. Some time later I understood that Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib was actually telling me that I should continue living with the outward means which I have been given, and that I should give up any notions of cutting myself off from everyone and severing my ties with the creation."

2. "I once pledged *bay'ah* to Hadrat Shaykh Abū Sa'īd *rahimahullāh* in my dream. Hadrat Shaykh then taught me some *dhikr*. Thereafter my eyes opened. I remembered the *dhikr* which he had taught me at the time, but I have forgotten it now. What I do remember though, is that the *dhikr* is practised in our lineage."

3. "I saw Hadrat Shaykh Dā'ūd Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in a dream. A white sheet was spread out on the ground and white *urad dhall* was placed on it. Hadrat Shaykh was seated on the one side, busy eating, while I was seated opposite him."

4. "I saw Hadrat Makhdūm 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Alī Ahmad Sābir Kalīrī *rahimahullāh* in a dream. He was calling me and saying, 'Come and rejoice with us.'"

5. "Quite some time ago I saw Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* [in a dream]. He and Maulwī Muḥammad Ghauth Sāhib – who was my *ustād* in the Persian language – were fighting against each other like wrestlers. When I saw the two fighting and I saw Maulānā Muḥammad Ghauth Sāhib being knocked down to the ground, I ran away from there. My eyes opened and due to my shyness, I never related this dream to Maulwī Sāhib, nor did I understand the dream at the time. I now think it means that Hadrat Shaykh *quddisa sirruhu* was tutoring Maulwī Sāhib."

6. "I had a dream in which I saw myself as a young boy. I emerged from Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs's *rahimahullāh* door (where the construction of the building was in process) and proceeded with some difficulty towards the *khānqāh*." Hadrat did not provide any explanation. Anyway, it is clear and does not need any explanation.

7. "When I went for hajj, I lay down in Janāb Hājī Sāhib's courtyard and fell asleep. In a dream I saw myself in a narrow lane. There were about forty people ahead of me. In my dream I thought that these people were *abdāl* and *aqṭāb* and that they were the attendants of this place. I made a *du'ā*, 'O Allāh, include me amongst this group.' After making this *du'ā*, I ran towards them and joined them. [Then] my eyes opened and I sat up. When I went to Murshidunā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, I related the dream to him. Hadrat smiled and said: 'You have already joined them, now what more do you want?'"

8. There was a group of Hadrat's *khādims* and associates in one of his assemblies. A discussion regarding dreams ensued. Hadrat said: "I had a dream in which blood was flowing from four of my fingers. A lot of blood was flowing from two of them, a little less from the third one, and even less from the fourth one. In the dream I said to myself: 'All four of your *nisbats* will continue.' Then my eyes opened. On one occasion I happened to relate this dream to Maulānā Muzaffar Husayn Sāhib Kāndhlawī⁴⁸. The moment he heard it, he said: 'All four of your *nisbats* will continue.'"

With absolute humility Hadrat Imām Rabbānī then said: "I have been waiting ever since that time. If Maulānā Muzaffar Husayn

⁴⁸ He was the younger brother of Hadrat Maulānā Is-hāq Sāhib and a *murīd* of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Sāhib. He was well-known for his piety and righteousness. He was a person who enjoyed many spiritual conditions and a high-ranking *buzurg*. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon him.

Sāhib was alive today, I would have said to him: 'It was you who interpreted this dream, now do something.'"

9. On one occasion Hadrat said: "I dreamt of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. He was standing on the threshold of his *khānqāh* and holding it. He was reading *durūd sharīf* as though he was conveying it to someone or teaching it to someone. The *durūd sharīf* was:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ بِعَدَدِ كُلِّ ذَرَّةٍ
اَلْفَ اَلْفِ مَرَّةٍ

*'O Allāh! Send salutations to Muhammad ﷺ
and the family of Muhammad ﷺ
equivalent to the number of every atom,
one million times.'*

Then my eyes opened." Then Hadrat said: "I have read this *durūd* abundantly and have experienced many blessings [because of its recital]."

10. "I had a dream in which I saw a river, and Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ was on one bank. I am not saying I saw him – but that is how it seemed. I was standing to his right." Then Hadrat said: "After all, a *muqtadi* (follower in *salāh*) stands to the right of his imām."

11. "I was made to see Janāb Rasūlullāh's ﷺ childhood period and the *ma'sūmiyyat*⁴⁹ of Fakhr-e-'Ālam Rasūl-e-Akram ﷺ was made manifest to me."

12. "There was a time when I had an intense desire to see Janāb

⁴⁹ From the word *ma'sūm*, which refers to the Divine Protection of Allāh ﷻ which is enjoyed by all His Prophets ﷺ. When we say that a Prophet is *ma'sūm*, it means he is Divinely Protected against all sin.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ. I could neither eat nor drink my normal quota. I used to engage in excessive *durūd sharīf* and this in itself was like food to me. My face became pale and my body emaciated. People used to ask me: 'Miyā Rashīd Aḥmad! Are you ill?' I would remain silent. What answer could I give them? Some days later – while I was in a state of *janābat* (major impurity)⁵⁰ – I saw Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ seated upon a stool. As I passed him, he ordered me saying: 'Go and call such and such an opium-addict.' Upon receiving this order, I hastened to carry it out. In my dream I thought to myself that I ought to present myself before Hadrat [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] in a state of purity, when my body and clothes are pure. So I started cleansing myself and my eyes opened."

One of those who were present, asked: "Hadrat, what is the interpretation of the dream?" Hadrat replied: "Call the people of this world, who have become intoxicated in their heedlessness, or those who are intoxicated with this world – and remove them from their intoxication, bring them to their senses and then convey them to me [Rasūlullāh ﷺ]."

13. "I had some food prepared with the intention of *īsāl-e-thawāb* (conveying reward) to Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. That day I dreamt of Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ and I saw myself seated next to him. My eyes opened after that." Hadrat then said: "Ever since that day, I had a love for the Hanafī madh-hab."

⁵⁰ Maulwī Wīlāyat Husayn Sūhib related this dream. He says: "The book, *Fawā'id-e-Sa'diyyah*, states the possibility of seeing Rasūlullāh ﷺ in a dream while the person is in a state of *janābat*. So any misgiving in this regard is removed." I ['Āshiq Ilāhī] say: "Meeting Rasūlullāh ﷺ and shaking hands with him, which entails touching his body, is established from the *Sahābah* ؓ. Thus there can be no objection to dreaming of Rasūlullāh ﷺ [while in a state of *janābat*], moreso because dreaming is an involuntary action. The story of Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ؓ is related in *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. ('Āshiq Ilāhī)

No one asked Hadrat about the connection between isāl-e-thawāb for Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs rahimahullāh and dreaming of Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ. Had someone asked him at the time, we would have probably learnt something new. In my ['Āshiq Ilāhī] humble opinion, this proves that Hadrat Shaykh ['Abd al-Quddūs] was from the Hanafī madh-hab. By virtue of the Shaykh's spirituality, Hadrat gained nearness to Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ whose opinions have, by and large, been adopted by the Hanafī madh-hab. This is the meaning of this good dream. Allāh ؓ knows best.

In the same assembly, Hadrat also said the following: "Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib was a righteous man who had a deep affinity with Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib's spirituality. When he experienced a desire to study, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib appeared in his dream and said: 'I will inform you of an excellent place to study. Go to Muftī 'Ināyat Aḥmad Sāhib in Kānpūr.' Then his eyes opened. Hāfiz 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib proceeded to Kānpūr and continued studying under the Muftī Sāhib."

When the Muftī Sāhib left Kānpūr, Maulwī 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib dreamt of Shāh Sāhib again. This time he said: 'I will now show you an even better place to study. Go to Maulwī Nūr al-Hasan Sāhib Kāndhlawī and study under him.' He proceeded to him and, a few days later, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib rahimahullāh appeared to him in a dream again and said: 'I will now show you an even better place.' He then mentioned my name and advised him to proceed to Gangoh. He came here and studied Hadīth."

After studying Hadīth and other Islamic subjects, Maulānā Hāfiz 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib became quite attached to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and remained in his company. He pledged *bay'ah* to him and remained engaged in *dhikr*. Imām Rabbānī also had a special love for him by virtue of his capabilities. He progressed tremendously and very quickly from Hadrat's bestowal. He became

a *sāhib-e-nisbat* in a short time and Hadrat Imām Rabbānī gave him *ijāzah* (permission) to accept *bay'ah*. Unfortunately, he passed away. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

The same Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib was the *ustād* of Hadrat's son, Hadrat Maulānā Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib. The Maulānā considered teaching him and remaining in his Shaykh's company to be the sole objective of his *Dīn* and worldly life. May Allāh ﷻ shower His Mercy upon him.

In that same assembly Hadrat also mentioned the following: "There was a *pīr zādah* in a certain place who dreamt of a *buzurg* from his lineage. Through the intercession of this *buzurg*, he was presented before Janāb Rasūlullāh ﷺ who said to him: 'Take him to Rashīd Aḥmad Hindī.'"

Hadrat related this dream in detail but we do not remember the words and therefore we will suffice by merely making mention of it. After having this dream, the *pīr zādah*'s eyes opened and he wrote to Hadrat. In his letter he expressed his intention and related details about his dream. Hadrat dictated this reply: "If you repent from *bid'āt*, I have no reason to refuse you."

Hadrat then spoke with absolute humility and submission: "I am treated in this way in this world. We will have to see whether we are something in the Hereafter or not."

Without any formalities, Hadrat would utter humble, unassuming statements of this nature. This was the result of the bond of servitude [his submission to Allāh ﷻ] which had permeated every vein of his body and, on account of which, he never attributed any excellence to himself. The lofty position to which he was raised demanded that, the more his rank and position would increase, the more insignificant and worthless he would consider himself to be.

The above were examples of the unseen testimonies and glad tidings regarding which Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

يراها المسلم أو تُرى له

"That a Muslim sees, or are shown to him."

These are considered to be the effects of righteousness and integrity, and it is a sign of *wilāyat* (close friendship with Allāh ﷻ) and *maqbuliyyat* (acceptance in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ).



What can be said about the statements of the special servants of Allāh ﷻ? The core of this group of *Ahlullāh* – the '*ulamā*' – unanimously accepted his leadership and considered it to be a means to salvation and a source of blessings to kiss his shoes and place them against their eyes! Several hundred leaders of *Dīn* and erudite '*ulamā*' from all parts of the world considered his mere existence to be a gift from Allāh ﷻ. They considered lowering their heads before him to be a means to success in both their *Dīnī* and worldly lives. This fact is in itself the greatest testimony that he was indeed the Qutb of the era. Truth be told, based upon the Hādīth, this also includes the testimony of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in his favour:

لا يجتمع أمّتي على الضلالة

"My ummah will not unanimously accept an evil."

From amongst Hadrat's associates, there is a large group of '*ulamā*' who uphold the *Dīn* and are strict adherents of the Sharī'ah. If I were to relate their praises, and their descriptions of Hadrat's merits, my entire life will pass in writing it down. Even then, I will not be able to fulfil the right of his academic and practical excellences. Since (according to the ignorant masses) their

testimony is not accepted as a true testimony, we shall not make mention of it. I will merely present a few statements which some famous *Ahlullāh* have made in his favour.

1. The most authoritative and reliable testimony, is that which was written by Murshid al-‘Arab wa al-‘Ajam A‘lā *Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh*, and published in *Diyā‘al-Qulūb*. *Inshā Allāh*, it will remain preserved until the Resurrection as an accepted bequest of the Shaykh:

“The person who has love, connection, attachment and confidence in this poor dervish (A‘lā *Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh*), should regard Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad and Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib as the embodiment of all the sciences of the internal and external knowledge of *Dīn*. They should be regarded even above the writer himself [A‘lā *Hadrat Hājī Sāhib*].

Although the opposite is found [in that they have come to me in order to pledge *bay‘ah*], in reality I have to go to them [in order to learn *Dīn*]. Understand their companionship to be a great boon, for to find their equal in this era is well-nigh impossible. Take benefit and *ḥaṣṣ* from making their *khidmat* (serving them).

Whatever aspects of *sulūk* and *ṭarīqah* have been mentioned in this treatise [*Diyā‘al-Qulūb*], let them peruse through it, and upon their approval, it will *inshā Allāh* be beneficial.

May Allāh ﷻ bless them in their lives, grant them all the favours and blessings of His *ma‘rifat* and honour them with His Proximity and Pleasure. May Allāh ﷻ elevate their stages in this world and in the next, and illuminate the entire world with the *Nūr* of their guidance (*hidāyat*). May Allāh ﷻ, through the blessings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, perpetuate their blessed *ḥaṣṣ* and their spiritual children until the Day of Resurrection. *Āmīn, Yā Rabbul Alamīn.*”

2. When Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib [Thānwī] was departing from Makkah Mu'azzamah, A'lā Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib said: "You must convey this to Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib: 'Although your opponents come to me and make numerous [derogatory] statements about you, you may rest assured that it does not affect me in the least. Our mutual love is for the Sake of Allāh ﷻ. Since Allāh ﷻ is Eternal, a love – which is for Allāh's Sake – is also eternal. That which I wrote about you in *Diya'al-Qulub*, was revealed to me through *ilhām* (Divine Inspiration). Can that knowledge of mine change now?'"

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī relates: "Upon my return to India, I conveyed A'lā Hadrat's message to Hadrat Maulānā. Hadrat Maulānā said: 'Bhāi! We are living on total reliance upon Allāh ﷻ.' The area which Hadrat Maulānā occupied in A'lā Hadrat's heart was obvious. This also demonstrates the great value of the testimony of a *Shaykh-e-kāmil* [of his calibre]."

3. Munshī Qādir Bakhsh Sāhib Bulandshahrī writes: "A pious 'ālim – whose name I can unfortunately not remember – was once with me on the road to Gangoh. He said to me: 'When my father returned to India after performing hajj, he related to us: 'I went to meet Hadrat Hājī Sāhib and Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib in Makkah Mu'azzamah. A'lā Hadrat said: 'Miyā! What are you saying? We are two lamps were lit from one flame.' He also said: 'If Allāh ﷻ were to ask me: 'Imdādullāh! What have you come with?' I will present Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib and Maulwī Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib to Him and say: 'This is what I have brought.'"

4. Maulwī 'Abd al-Majīd Sāhib Hazārī used to relate: "When I commenced my studies of Hadīth under Maulwī Nadhīr Husayn Sāhib Dehlawī in Delhi, my heart was in turmoil and I would regularly dream of piglets walking around me. My heart became totally dejected and disillusioned because of these dreams.

I left, proceeded directly to Ganj Murādābād, presented myself before Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib [Ganjmurādābādī] *rahimahullāh* and related the nature of my studies and dreams to him. The Maulānā asked: 'Where are you studying?' I replied: 'In Delhi, under Maulānā Nadhīr Husayn Sāhib.' He said: 'Go to Gangoh and study under Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib. He is teaching Hadīth there.' He then started to speak out in praise of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī for quite some time. Then he added: 'When you go to him you must convey my *salām* to him and tell him that Fadl ar-Rahmān has sent you to him.'"

Maulwī 'Abd al-Majīd Sāhib proceeded to Gangoh. When he presented himself before Hadrat, he was seated on a stool to perform *wudū* and was using the *miswāk* (cleaning his teeth) at the time. He smiled when he saw me, and I offered *salām* and conveyed Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib's *salām* and message to him. He also added: "The Maulānā spoke a lot in praise of you and it is he who has sent me to you." After hearing his entire speech, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī said with absolute humility and submission: "He himself is worthy of a lot of praise. That is why he praises other people. Apart from that, I am nothing."

Maulwī 'Abd al-Majīd Sāhib used to say: "I commenced studying Hadīth and benefited greatly from Hadrat's blessings. From that very day, my worries started to decrease and my delight and happiness increased by the moment."

5. Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib writes: "After Hadrat passed away, I had the opportunity of meeting Sayyid Tāhir Sāhib – the leader of Maulāngar, district Maunger. We started talking about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī. Sayyid Sāhib's eyes welled up with tears. He took an oath and said: 'I was in the presence of my *murshid* (Shaykh) Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* when he spoke about the *buzurghs*. One of those who were present asked him about Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib's condition."

I clearly remember Hadrat Maulānā saying these words: 'What are you asking me about Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib's condition? He has drunk the ocean and did not even burp.' Since hearing these words of Hadrat [Maulānā Fadl ar-Raḥmān Ganjmurādābādī], I have come to know of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib and I consider him to be a very great *buzurg*."

6. Maulānā Nūr Muḥammad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I believe in the meaning of the word *walī*, but I have not seen the embodiment of it as yet. In the past, there were many who were the embodiment of this word. However, in our times, I have not come across any *walī* apart from Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*."

This statement of the Maulānā was either made out of *ghalabah-e-hāl* (one who is overcome by his condition), or it was made with reference to a very exalted stage or a specific quality in Hadrat's character which he would have liked to see in a *walī*. Alternatively, he may have seen something in Hadrat Imām Rabbānī which he did not see elsewhere, and that prompted him to make such a statement, because the world is never devoid of a *walī*. Allāh ﷻ sends forth His accepted servants in every era and to every nation. Their rank and position may differ – but that is another matter.

7. Maulānā 'Abd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a *buzurg* from Shāh Jahānpūr. One day, he gave a full physical description of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī to Maulwī Sahūl Sāhib and asked: "Is this description I have given you the physical description of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī?" Maulwī Sahūl Sāhib was astonished because the Maulānā had never gone to Gangoh and had never had the opportunity of meeting Hadrat, yet he was able to provide a full description of him!

Maulānā 'Abd al-Qādir Sāhib said: "It has been my life-long wish and desire to meet Hadrat, but what can I do? I cannot go. I have

not had an opportunity. I have never been to Gangoh, but I once had this dream: There was a certain Musjid and a *buzurg* of this description entered it. The people were saying: 'This is Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib.' I went in and Hadrat Maulānā called me. He extended his hand and said: 'Come, become a *murīd*.' I became a *murīd* there and then. Then my eyes opened. The following morning I related my dream to Maulwī 'Ubayd al-Haqq Sāhib Marhūm. I described the Musjid and Hadrat's face to him. He affirmed my description and said: 'It is certainly a correct description of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī and his Musjid.' I have described him to you today and you also affirmed my description."

8. During the days when Hadrat's opponents had created an uproar regarding the issue of *imkān-e-kidhb* and had issued a *fatwā* of *kufī* against him [Hadrat], a certain *maulwī* made mention of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī during an assembly of Sā'in Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib Ambālwī and said: "He [Imām Rabbānī] believes in *imkān-e-kidhb* with respect to Allāh ﷻ." Upon hearing this, Sā'in Tawakkul Shāh Sāhib lowered his head and remained in meditation for a short while. He then raised his head and said these words in his Punjābī language: "O people! What are you saying? I can see Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib's pen moving in front of the 'Arsh [Allāh's Throne]."

9. Fayd Muḥammad Khān Sāhib Bhaungāmī used to say: "I met a foreign *buzurg* in Madīnah Munawwarah. He was an extremely handsome young man who was from somewhere near Kabul. He related to me: 'I spent a long time travelling to Baghdad, Basra, Iraq, Syria and other Islamic countries in search of the *Ahlullāh*. During the course of my extensive travels, I reached Halab (Aleppo in Syria). There I met a *Shaykh-e-kāmil*, a unique personality of this era, an ardent follower of the Sunnah, and an erudite scholar of the time, by the name of Maulānā Husām ad-Dīn Sāhib Qādirī Naqshbandī. I pledged *bay'ah* to him. He kept me in his company for two and half years and put me through several types of

mujāhadah (striving and spiritual exercises).

[Earlier] this year he told me: 'Go to India, pledge *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib Muḥaddith of the Chishtīyyah Sābirīyyah order and then return. If the Maulānā asks you to remain with him, you must remain and acquire his blessings, but you must leave as a matter of urgency because Hadrat's time for departure from this world is drawing near.' Thus I am heading for Gangoh. Tell me about the journey and the easiest way to reach."

This *buzurg* then came to India, pledged *bay'ah* at Hadrat's hands and departed. Along the way, he met Fayd Muḥammad Khān Sāhib in Ilāhābād. He was extremely respectful towards him and related his story to him. He said: "When I reached Sahāranpūr, the rain was pouring down heavily. I could not find any transport and I was restless to meet Hadrat. I started walking, although I had to wade through water which reached up to my knees. My yearning to meet him caused me to feel no discomfort whatsoever.

I reached Gangoh at *zuhr* time and proceeded directly to the Musjid. Then I squeezed the water out of my clothes and dried them. After the *zuhr salāh*, I presented myself to Hadrat. I cannot even describe the nobility of Hadrat Maulānā's exalted character. He met this servant [referring to himself] with absolute affection and initiated me into the Sābirīyyah lineage. In reality, one would need an entire lifetime to acquire what I managed to acquire in a few days on his threshold. Such a great bounty certainly justified the long and arduous journey which I had to undertake.

After remaining in his company for a few days, Hadrat said to me: 'You may now return to Halab and convey my *salām* to your Shaykh.' This foreign *buzurg* returned to Halab and, a few months later during that same year, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī passed away.

Some *yogīs* and pundits also acknowledged Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's

excellence. This was but one of the effects of Hadrat's all-embracing acceptance. Although they themselves were steeped in *kufr* and deviation, they considered him to be a man of lofty rank and merit. Maulwī Muḥammad Sahūl Sāhib writes: "On one occasion I was travelling from Gangoh to Deoband. Along the way I became thirsty, and walked towards a farm. A *yogī* pundit was seated there. Upon seeing me he said: 'Are you coming from Maulwī's place?' I replied in the affirmative. Upon hearing this, he started speaking in praise of Hadrat and said: 'There is no *fakir* like him in the entire kingdom of India.' I asked him: 'How do you know this?' He replied: 'I have seen the entire world and I have full knowledge of Maulwī's condition. I have not come across a more perfect person than him.'"

There were '*ulamā*' who differed with him regarding contentious issues (*masā'il ikhtilāfiyyah*), yet they fully acknowledged his lofty position.

يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ

"They recognize him as they recognize their own sons."

Although they recognized everything, they continued to follow the dictates of their egos. Munshī Muḥammad Khusro Sāhib Bhāgalpūrī used to say: "When I went to Makkah Mu'azzamah, Maulwī Muḥammad Husayn Sāhib Marhūm Ilāhābādī happened to be there. One day, mention was made of Hadrat Maulānā. I said to him: 'Some *maulwīs* labelled him as a *kāfir* due to the issue of *imkān-e-kidhb*. What is your opinion in this regard?' He replied: 'They are making a serious mistake. If such a great *buzurg* is a *kāfir*, who will remain a Muslim?'"

There is an Arabic proverb:

الْفَضْلُ مَا شَهِدَتْ بِهِ الْأَعْدَاءُ

*"The merit of a man lies in the testimony
which his enemies give in his favour."*

Hāfiz Amīr Hasan Sāhib's father, Amīr Aḥmad Sāhib Gangohī, used to be the deputy magistrate of Āgrah. Hafiz 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib Deobandī once told the magistrate of Āgrah: "For a long time it had been my heart's desire to meet *buzurghs*. A *buzurg* taught me an '*amal* (practice) and said: 'If you dream of any person who has passed away, you must hold both his thumbs. Whatever you ask him after that – he will give you the answer and advise you.' He also added: 'However, most of the time when a person has these dreams, you cannot remember whether the one you are dreaming about has already passed away or not. If you can remember, you can draw benefit from this '*amal*.'"

The Deputy Sāhib continued: "I really liked this '*amal* and impressed it upon my heart. In the beginning, whenever I dreamt of any person, I could not remember whether he had passed away or not and whether I should hold his thumbs and ask him anything. But, because it had now become so firmly impressed upon my mind and I was constantly aware of it, my memory started to assist me – even while I was asleep. Nowadays, whenever I dream of a deceased person, I can immediately tell that he has passed away and I would take hold of his thumbs and ask him whatever I wished.

Coincidentally, one Shī'ah from Gangoh passed away. I dreamt of him and held both his thumbs immediately. He became agitated and worried. Then he said: 'Ask me whatever you have to, but do so as quick as possible, because your holding my thumbs is causing me discomfort.' I said: 'Very well, tell me what you experienced after you passed away and what your condition is at present?' He replied: 'I am suffering a very painful punishment. When I was ill, Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib came to visit me. The parts of my body which the Maulwī Sāhib had touched have been saved from the punishment, but the rest of my body is suffering a painful

torment.' My eyes opened thereafter."

Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's acceptance, by virtue of his total emulation of the Sunnah, is so clear that it will be correct if we refer to it as:

من أجلى البديهيات

"One of the most obvious amongst obvious things."

كالشمس في نصف النهار

"As clear as the mid-day sun."

However, when the internal darkness and hard-heartedness of certain deprived souls does not even permit them to acknowledge the obvious and clear bestowal and blessings of the Seal of the Prophets [Rasūlullāh] ﷺ, how can we express sorrow over those who reject the *wilāyat* or *qutbīyyat* (being a Qutb) of the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the *qutb* of the era? If Allāh ﷻ blesses a person with insight, he will realize that the heavens, the earth, and even the trees and rocks bear testimony to his *wilāyat*. All living souls – even the ants in their holes and the fish in the oceans – made *du'ā'* for progress in his life and for the descent of unlimited Mercies upon him.

It was not only humans who had benefited from his blessed self and his mercy-attracting existence. Instead, every creation – in some way or another – experienced comfort and tranquility. In fact, even the green grass and the leaves of the trees were not deprived of their lushness. Every heart which has been endowed with perception and intuition will bear witness that the tranquillity which had descended three years ago no longer exists. This is because the beloved leader, who possessed angelic qualities and through whom the world was showered with favours, has bid farewell to this fleeting world and proceeded to the Eternal World.

رفع الله درجاته في أعلى العليين
وحشرنا في زمرة بحرمة خاتم النبيين، آمين يا رب العالمين

“May Allāh ﷻ elevate his ranks in the Highest Heavens and may He resurrect us amongst his associates, through the sanctity of the Seal of the Prophets.

Āmīn, O Lord of the universe.”

ILLNESS AND DEMISE

*The king of Dīn has gone to the grave
and has made us sleep on the ground [out of sorrow].*

*He showed the path of Dīn to everyone
and he has left a burning flame [of love in our hearts].*

Who can hear the lamenting and wailing of our hearts?

Who will now cure our hearts that are ailing?

*The one who used to medicate and cure its sickness
has closed his [consultation room] and left us.*

Do not ask the condition of those who are heart-broken.

With which tongue and which words will I describe our grief?

*He is Rashīd Aḥmad – the one of excellent attributes,
and he has left us lamenting and crying.*

*There is no tranquillity and no peace [left] for us
nor can we count the grief and sadness that has befallen us.*

This grave that you see is his mazaar ...

My beloved is lying here.

Under the chapter titled ‘Birth’, we spoke of the rising of the sun of excellences. In this chapter titled ‘Demise’, the time has come to speak about the setting of the moon of *wilāyat*. The changing of times and situations need no explanation.

*Every person alive should remember the words
that time declares and announces:
'Everything upon the earth is bound to perish.'*

Anyone who has come into this world, has come to be destroyed. Anything which has been born into this world, is bound to become obliterated. But, when a person obliterates himself and annihilates himself in the obedience of his Master [Allāh ﷻ] before his actual (physical) death, then his death is not really a death ... it is a life.

*Life is not the life that I am living ...
Life is that in which there is union with the Beloved.*

The death of the *Ahlullāh* – which is referred to as *wiṣāl* (passing on, demise) – is not sorrowful because they have now lost this world and its pleasures. Rather, it is sorrowful because, once their luminous faces disappear from our sight, the hopes and desires of thousands of people are extinguished. The aspirations of countless people are buried in the ground without any shroud. When the attention of the beloved – who was the focus of their world – is suddenly taken away, it is a most sorrowful scene. This can only be fathomed by his lovers.

§.

People have always been born into this world and are constantly departing. But, the birth of one entails the birth of thousands of others – and the death of one entails the death of thousands of others.

What can be said about the demise of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī? His demise caused the death of so many hopes. Countless hopes and aspirations of the creation were buried along with his corpse.

*Who says that the corpse of Hātim⁵¹ is alone in his grave?
Thousands of sorrows are buried at the side of the ocean.*

When the shade of such an affectionate, loving and kind father is taken away from a child who had been nurtured and tutored by him – a child who did not even know about the ups and downs of life – then any grief he expresses at the time of his father's demise is acceptable and understandable. When inexperienced travellers lose the captain of their ship and they begin to cry out in desperation, it is most understandable because, apart from them, no one else can fully appreciate his [the captain's] worth and value.

*There is no friend in this world
who can fulfil the rights of being a confidant,
nor is there any beloved
who can ask Hasan (name of poet) of his condition.*

The conclusion of the second volume of this biography is being written at a time when many of the ship-wrecked passengers have not reached the shore of safety as yet.

*We are the people, sailing in a sailboat ...
[and we are] totally dependent upon the wind
to let us see our Beloved again.*

Hadrat passed away in the year 1323 A.H. From the very beginning of that year, one could see a change in him. He had become so self-effaced and engrossed within himself, that there were times when he did not even recognize his close associates. This clearly revealed the reality that he was about to break off his outward bond with this world. Unfortunately, no one realized it at the time.

⁵¹ This refers to Hātim Tā'ī – a famous Arab whose generosity had become proverbial. His generosity is compared to the ocean.

A few days before Hadrat received the news of A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's demise, one of his associates had a dream in which he saw A'lā Hadrat arriving in Deoband. His face was as luminous as the sun, and he said: "I have already died. I have come to take Maulwī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib. I will take him away by the 20th of Dhū al-Hijjah."

Hadrat's close associates felt quite disturbed when they heard this dream and related it to Hadrat. He explained and interpreted it and removed the concern and disturbance which they were experiencing. However, he also repeated several times: "The interpretation is merely an interpretation. How many times can a person die during this period?" At times he would say the following with absolute joy: "If Hadrat is going to come to take me, then I have hope that I will be taken in a good way." Even after hearing such clear statements from Hadrat's mouth, his associates – who were overcome with love for him – did not think about his demise.

Several months before his demise, a special change occurred in his continuous habits for the sake of those who possessed understanding. We ought to refer to this as a prelude to his onward journey. [The following changes had occurred in his habits]: (1) From around the world, people flocked to him in droves, and he did not send anyone away deprived. (2) He increased his acts of worship. (3) His abstention and asceticism increased. (4) He disliked accepting gifts and even refused to accept it at times – even when the person insisted. (5) He repeatedly spoke about the fleeting nature of this world. (6) Upon the slightest request, he would permit seekers (*tālibīn*) to stay at the *khānqāh*. In fact, he would make subtle suggestions to his *khādims* to engage in *dhikr* and to present themselves before him. (7) He passed on special benefit to his group of associates in a general manner. (8) Whenever people sought leave from him, he would bid them farewell with absolute affection. He would console those who trembled upon the separation by saying: "*Inshā Allāh*, you will return soon."

In short, every act of his was a demonstration that the fountain from the garden of knowledge was going to return into the ground, and that the luminous sun of guidance was about to set and disappear. The frightening dreams of the seekers and associates, as well as the night visions of his close associates and lovers, were separate indications to the impending time of departure of the 'Junayd' of the time and the 'Bā Yazīd' of the era.

However, his death was like one's own death. Although it was a certainty, there was such an oversight with regard to it that it seemed as though Hadrat Imām Rabbānī would live forever – as though the time would never come when his bier would be placed upon our shoulders, his lifeless, pure body would be before us, and his *ghusl*, *tajhīz wa takfīn* (bathing and enshrouding) would be handed over to his *khādims*.

Oh! That *'īd al-fitr*! It ought to be referred to as the '*īd al-wadā*' (the farewell '*īd*'). [The day] expressed his belovedness as he was placed on a palanquin and brought to the '*īd gāh*' (place where the '*īd salāh*' is performed). It was carried by a large group of erudite '*ulamā*' and special servants of Allāh ﷺ. The sense of awe which surrounded its arrival at the '*īd gāh*' could not even have been enjoyed by a king who ruled over the entire world. The pure group, under whose feet the angels had spread their wings, carried the palanquin on their shoulders with an enthusiasm which would probably never be witnessed again.

There was just one palanquin, but there were thousands of people who were eager to place it upon their shoulders. Thus, they passed it on from one person to another – each elated by their great fortune and overjoyed at acquiring this eternal bounty. In this way they proceeded towards the '*īd gāh*'. Despite their efforts, there were countless people who could not get a chance to have the palanquin placed upon their shoulders. They considered merely touching it to be their good fortune, and if even this was not possible, they felt

that they should join in the good by merely providing support to those who were carrying it. They did not know that the time would soon arrive when they would have to carry it upon their own shoulders with grief and sorrow and that this joy and happiness would soon be replaced.

When Hadrat arrived at the *'īd gāh* and ascended the podium, his face appeared like the full moon. Thousands of eyes beheld him and were enraptured by his beauty. Countless people looked at him with hearts filled with love for him. It seemed as though they were saying:

عَسَى جَمَالُكَ يَجْلُو عَلَيَّ كَالْبَدْرِ

"Perhaps your beauty will appear before me like the full moon."

After leading the people in the *salāh*, Hadrat delivered the *khutbah* (sermon). He explained the rules and regulations in Urdu, and during the course of his talk he said: "There is a Hadīth that states that, if the world was equal to even the wing of a mosquito in Allāh's Sight, He would not have given even a sip of water to the disbelievers." He then spoke about the asceticism of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh*. Then he said: "Hadrat Shaykh's asceticism was such that he spent his entire life wearing just one *kurtah*. Whenever the *kurtah* tore in any place, he would pick up rags and pieces of cloth which had been thrown around in the drains. Then he would wash and purify the rag and use it to patch his *kurtah*." Only those who were present during his *khutbah* will be able to vocalise the effect which these few words had on them. Countless people started weeping profusely and many others cried out.

Hadrat only remained at the *'īd gāh* for a short while after the *khutbah*. Then he was carried back to the *khānqāh* on the palanquin by the '*ulamā*' and *sulahā*' (righteous servants) in the same way

that he was brought to the *'īd gāh*.

There was not a portion of the palanquin that had not been carried on the heads or shoulders, or touched by the hands of anyone from amongst the *Ahlullāh*. He sat on it with all his external and internal beauty, and continually repeated these words: "O Allāh! I am nothing. I enjoy no status, but these people have good thoughts about me. Oh Allāh! Treat them and me in accordance with their good thoughts of me." This was a comprehensive *du'ā'*, and most appropriate to the time and place.

No matter how much pride these bearers may have experienced – it would be deficient, and no matter how much gratitude they may have expressed towards Allāh ﷻ – it would be insufficient for this great bounty. The time has passed and the fruits and rewards of the *du'ā'* are still anticipated. These will soon be handed out by the Generous Allāh – *inshā Allāh*.

As time elapsed, the signs of his [impending] departure became more apparent. The time was drawing near for the lover to meet his Beloved [Allāh ﷻ]. His devoted associates were informed of his physical separation through true dreams. There were not merely ten or twenty dreams of this nature, but countless. They all announced the completion of the responsibility which had been placed upon Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's shoulders. The duty for which this deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ had been sent into this world had been accomplished. Hadrat's humility and submission increased by the day, and his yearning for [engaging in] worship became more and more intense. This condition continued until the arrival of the first day of his *marad al-maut* (final illness).

Those servants of Allāh ﷻ who were engaged in *dhikr* in the *khānqāh*, were clearly shown in their dreams that this was the final period of their earning. Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib Surtī – who remained engaged in *dhikr* during this final period – writes: "I had a dream in

which I saw many drums of crystal clear water being placed before Hadrat. Those who were present were drinking the water. When everyone had quenched their thirst, I got up and drank some of the water [as well]. No one drank after me.

I had another dream in which many people were seated in lines. Another person was walking around, sprinkling pure water onto them. I was seated at the end of the line. Water was sprinkled on me as well. Then the dream ended.

I had a third dream in which I saw a fast-moving train. There were many passengers [on this train] and I was amongst them. Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib was driving the train. At one place, the train stopped. All the passengers disembarked and the train proceeded with great speed. I was crying as I ran behind it in an effort to catch up with it, but I could not catch up. I continued screaming – begging to be taken with – but no one felt sorry for me. Hadrat Maulānā (who was driving the train) replied and continued: 'Ahmad, do not worry. Walk with your own strength and move on foot. You will catch up with me.' Upon hearing this reply, I started walking and the train departed.

One day I dreamt that I was going to my house. Hadrat Maulānā accompanied me for some distance to bid farewell to me. He shook hands with me and said: 'Go, Allāh is your Protector.'"

Maulwī Ahmad Sāhib's dreams ended with this dream which he had on the night preceding Hadrat's demise. He saw himself disembarking a train and going to purchase a ticket for another destination. The person selling the tickets was a stranger. By the time he reached him, the train started to depart. He shouted: "Hey! Hey! I am getting left behind. Give me a ticket quickly." The ticket seller said: "Ahmad, do not cry. The time of departure for this train has expired. It cannot wait. You cannot board it. Another train will be available in ten to twelve years' time. You must board it then."

Munshī Qādir Bakhsh Sāhib Bulandshahrī writes: "Eight days before Hadrat's demise, I dreamt that people were talking about Hadrat Imām Rabbānī coming to Bulandshahr. In my enthusiasm to welcome him, I went to the outskirts of the town and stood near the fenced area of the orchard. A short while later an ox-wagon arrived. Hadrat was inside it. I rushed towards it and saw Hadrat Imām Rabbānī sleeping inside. A thin white fabric was covering his face. Out of respect for him, I could not wake him up. So, I walked alongside the ox-wagon. After walking a few steps, I asked the driver, who was a very handsome-looking man, what his name was. He replied: 'My name is Muḥammad 'Alī.' Thereupon my eyes suddenly opened."

If we were to collect all the dreams of this nature, we would be able to fill an entire volume. In short, there was no dearth of announcements from the Unseen regarding his impending demise. However, due to the overpowering love which his lovers had for him, they did not permit any thoughts of his demise to become impressed upon their hearts. Time thus continued in the same peaceful and tranquil manner.

On the night of the 12th or 13th of Jumādā al-Ūlā 1323 A.H., Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was feeling a bit light-headed. He went into his room to perform *nafl ṣalāh* and became occupied in a private dialogue (*munājāt*) with Allāh ﷻ. On that same night, a poisonous insect or reptile bit him beneath the nails of his little and middle toes, but Hadrat was so fully engrossed in *ṣalāh* that he did not feel anything.

The following morning, when he started walking towards the Musjid, one of his *khādims* saw red blood stains on his clothes. When he informed Hadrat of this, he rushed to change his clothes, because the time for sunrise was approaching. After changing his clothes, Hadrat performed the *fajr ṣalāh*.

After the ṣalāh, Hadrat returned to his room and went to lie on his bed. When he removed his feet from his sandals and placed them on top of his shoes, his *khādims* noticed dried blood on his toes. They became very concerned, entered his room, brought his *muṣallā* outside and inspected it. They found it soaked in blood. The blood had seeped right through the carpet and could be seen underneath.

The anxiety of servants upon seeing their master's pain and discomfort was spontaneous. All those who were present were at a loss. Some of them thought that a vein had somehow burst open and that the blood had flowed out of its own accord. Others were of the opinion that a small mouse must have bitten him. Throughout all these conversations, Hadrat merely remarked: "I did not feel any pain at the time when whatever was biting me bit me, nor am I feeling any pain or discomfort at present."

Hadrat's lack of concern and disregard of this incident also diverted the thoughts and concerns of the others. However, he had lost quite a bit of blood and, due to this, he started to experience some weakness and sleepiness the very next day. He spent most of his time reading *wazīfahs* [during that day] but, whenever he lay down, sleep would overpower him immediately and he would start snoring. Whenever his *khādims* went to him to inquire about his condition, he would reply: "Now I have nothing to do – except to sleep. My entire body is now filled with phlegm."

Despite Hadrat's severe weakness and overpowering drowsiness, there was no decrease whatsoever in his *ma'mūlāt* (practices) and *wazīfahs*. Regardless of what time he fell asleep, his eyes would automatically open a few minutes before the *adhān* and the first words he would utter would be: "Has the *adhān* been called? How much time is there before the ṣalāh?"

Hadrat remained unconcerned about the slight wound on his toes

and – apart from covering the wound with moist paper in order to prevent the flies from settling on it – he did not use any medication. Consequently, it never even crossed the *khādims*' minds that this same wound would be the prelude to his demise.

On Monday, 27 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1323 A.H. (corresponding with the 31st of July 1905) after the '*ishā salāh*', Hadrat was lying down on his bed. His *khādims* were massaging his body when he suddenly started to tremble. His temperature rose drastically, yet he was shivering with cold. After some time the shivering stopped, but his fever continued rising. This made it difficult for him to keep his hand above his sheet.

He suffered with intense fever the entire Tuesday. It was merely considered to be a temporary fever and thus he was given some ordinary medication. However, when his fever remained the same on that Wednesday, everyone's concern for him increased. His son, Maulānā Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib, turned his full attention towards treating him.

Coincidentally, Maulwī Hakīm Muḥammad Ismā'īl Sāhib arrived from Bombay, and he also started treating Hadrat. It was then that he noticed the condition of his spiritual guide, teacher and Shaykh. The place on his toes from which he had bled, had started to turn slightly green. Thus, it was his opinion that Hadrat had probably been bitten by a snake.

[However], some people were of the opinion that witchcraft had been performed on him and that this was the result of the enmity of his enemies – just like his previous illness. Steps were therefore taken to combat this. In short, no stone was left unturned in adopting different measures, treating him, serving him, and tending to him. But, no one can defer the Order of Fate, and no one can turn back the clock of the arriving hour. Therefore no measure proved to be effective and no medication was of any benefit.

His feet became more swollen by the day and the swelling started spreading to his legs. His physical condition was worsening, and the obvious pain that he experienced increased constantly. On the 8th or 9th of Jumādā ath-Thānīyah 1323 A. H. (corresponding with the 11th of August 1905) Hadrat eventually bid farewell to this world. It was a Friday when he proceeded laughing and smiling towards the Highest Companionship (*ar-Rafīq al-A'lā*) soon after the *adhān* at 12:30 p.m. He was eighty-three years, seven months and three days old upon his demise.

For six days prior to his demise, Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was awaiting the arrival of Friday. On the Saturday he asked: "Is it Friday today?" His *khādims* replied: "Hadrat, it is Saturday." Several times after that he asked whether it was Friday. Eventually, on Friday morning – the day of his demise – he asked: "What day is it today?" When he was informed that it was Friday, he said:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return."

Detailed information regarding Hadrat's demise has been published in the book, *Wasl al-Habīb*. I do not see the need to repeat it here. All I wish to say is that his passing is the kind of passing which thousands of people hope for and they are prepared to sacrifice a thousand lifetimes for a death like his.

The glad tidings which people received through their dreams after his demise are also unique and exceptional. There were countless [of dreams] and we will need an entire volume to relate them all.

1. A person by the name of Muḥammad Shafī' – a soldier in Port Blair – writes: "I saw Hadrat Maulānā in a dream in which he read one verse and disappeared. He read the following verse:

وَأِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ

"We are most certainly to return to our Sustainer."

A few days later, the news of his demise was published throughout the country and I also came to hear about it."

*The Murshid of Gangoh
has left this world of tribulation
... on a Friday*

*When Allāh called him unto Himself
his soul became freed from the confines of his body
... on a Friday*

*All men and women started weeping
due to the grief of this separation
... on a Friday*

*This great noble soul
passed away on 1323 Hijri
... on a Friday*

2. Maulwī Aḥmad Sāhib Sūrtī relates: "Upon returning to my home town, I started experiencing some anxiety. I became restless, left home, and proceeded to Bombay. That same night I saw Ḥadrat in my dream. He passed his hand over my heart and my entire body and said: 'Aḥmad! Do not be anxious. We have all experienced such problems in our lives. This is bound to happen. We should not stress over these things.'"

3. A person by the name of Sulaymān Miyā lives in one of the villages on the outskirts of Sūrat. He had a dream in which he saw two *buzurghs* with very pure appearances. They were seated upon a throne. Another person was standing beneath the throne. Sulaymān

Miyā asked this person: "Who is that senior person sitting on the throne and who is the person who is seated next to him?" He replied: "The senior person is Fakhr-e-'Ālam [Rasūlullāh] ﷺ, and the person next to him is Maulwī Aḥmad's pīr, Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib." Sulaymān Miyā related this dream to Maulwī Aḥmad Sāhib, who then asked him: "When did you have this dream?" He thought about it for some time and replied: "On the 8th or 9th of Jumādā ath-Thānīyah." It was the same day Ḥadrat Imām Rabbānī departed from this world.



How much can we relate in this book? We will really need another volume if we were to record all these narrations. In short, the one who had irrigated the sciences and cognition (*ma'rifat*) [rational and spiritual sciences] and had paved the path of the Sharī'ah and Tarīqah had been raised from this world. The sun of knowledge and guidance had set. The moon of abstinence and integrity had disappeared. A person has every right to sob to his heart's content. Regardless of the extent of the restlessness which an ardent follower of the Sunnah may experience, he would have every right to do so. If there is any consolation to be taken, it may be taken from the following poem:

إصْبِرْ لِكُلِّ مُصِيبَةٍ وَتَجَلَدْ - وَاعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ الْمَرَّةَ غَيْرَ مُخَلَّدٍ
وَإِذَا ذُكِّرْتَ مُصِيبَةً تَسَلَّوْا بِهَا - فَادْكُرْ مُصَابِكَ بِالنَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ

Exercise patience and fortitude in every affliction.

You should know that no person is to live forever.

If you wish to recall any affliction

through which you can take consolation,

then remember the affliction

of the passing away of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

The majority of Ḥadrat's associates were 'ulamā'. Those who were

not '*ulamā*' were amongst the intelligent and gifted people of the time. Consequently, the date of his demise has been written in very unique ways in the Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. It has been written in poetry, prose, compositions, extracted words, and [words with] metaphysical meanings. Some of these will now be presented to the reader:

1. Zubdatul Muhaddithīn Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib, the principal lecturer at Madrasah 'Āliyah, Deoband:

إِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

*"He shall most certainly be amongst
the righteous ones in the Hereafter."*

2. Qudwatul Atqiyā' Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Maulwī 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Sāhib Rāipūrī:

كُنْتَ حَمِيدًا لَمْتَ شَهِيدًا

*"You were a commendable person
and you certainly died as a martyr."*

3. The physician of the *ummah*, Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hāj al-Maulwī Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī:

مَوْلَانَا عَاشَ حَمِيدًا مَاتَ شَهِيدًا

"The Maulānā lived a commendable life and died as a martyr."

4. Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Maulwī 'Azīz ar-Raḥmān Sāhib, the muftī of Madrasah Deoband:

حَيٌّ دَخَلَ الْخُلْدَ

"He was a living person who entered eternity."

RIGHTEOUS PROGENY

Imām Rabbānī has departed from this world, but he left behind a flowing river of righteous progeny who were sufficient to irrigate those who were thirsty for rectitude and guidance. An entire era would be needed in order to expend the bestowal of this sancitized occupation in which he was engaged for fifty years. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, the tree which he had planted is so productive that the world will benefit from its bestowal of gifts for a long time to come.

When a person leaves behind a righteous child, he expresses his pride and considers that child to be a means of attaining forgiveness [from Allāh ﷻ]. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī has left behind thousands of righteous children who are not only making *du'ā'* for him, but are also preparing generation upon generation of individuals – all of whom are making *du'ā'* for his progress in rank.

The bestowal of his bond of servitude [submission to Allāh ﷻ] and the fruits of his steadfastness on the Sharī'ah have conveyed a special type of benefit to the creation. This benefit has not been restricted to humans, but extends to the plant and animal kingdoms as well. Thus, every atom in this world has become a means for Imām Rabbānī's reward in the Hereafter. As long as people continue to benefit from the wholesome trees which he had planted, his soul will continue to receive gifts from the four corners of the earth.

At present, two of Hadrat's children are still alive – his son, Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāfiẓ al-Hakīm Mas'ūd Aḥmad Sāhib and his daughter, Safīyyah Khātūn. If we were to write about the capabilities, insight and intelligence of these two, we would have to devote a

completely separate biography to them.

Hadrat's son bears great physical resemblance to him and he possesses that special spark which his father used to have. His voice and style of speaking is also similar to that of Hadrat. Hadrat had a special love for Hakīm Sāhib. Truth be told – after the demise of Maulānā Maḥmūd Aḥmad Marḥūm, Hakīm Sāhib became a combination of two sons. The light of both eyes could now be found in one person. And why should this not be so? After all, he was a part of Hadrat's flesh and the fruit of his heart.

When Hadrat Imām Rabbānī recovered from his first illness, people from different areas cooked food and fed it to the masses as a way of giving thanks to Allāh ﷻ. Out of the natural joy which gushed forth from him over Hadrat's recovery, Pīr Jiyo 'Abd al-Majīd Sāhib also prepared a meal in Gangoh. He invited all his friends to the meal. Some people, who bore ill-feeling towards Hakīm Sāhib, would not join in the meal. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī expressed his disappointment by quoting this Hadīth:

أَنَا سَلِّمٌ لِمَنْ سَالَمْتُمْ وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبْتُمْ

*"I make peace with those whom you make peace with,
and declare war against those whom you make war against."*

In other words, the person who shows enmity towards Mas'ūd Aḥmad, shows enmity towards me. The one who considers him to be his friend, is my friend.

Hadrat's daughter, Safīyyah Khātūn, possesses even more excellent qualities and merits, because she is four years older than Hakīm Sāhib and was therefore able to benefit even more from her father's blessings. On one occasion, Hadrat said: "If women had been permitted to accept *bay'ah*, my Safīyyah would have initiated *murīds*." Her capability and lofty spiritual status is obvious from

this statement.

On one occasion, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib said: "The sister is regular with the *laṭā'if-e-sittah*, but she does not mention this to anyone." It would not be incorrect if we were to refer to her as the Rābī'ah Baṣrīyyah of our era. I am hesitant to mention her merits in this book because she does not like them to be exposed.

On one occasion, Hadrat made the following statement with real joy: "*Al-hamdulillāh*, my daughter has no attachment whatsoever with this world." If we were to look at it with an open mind, [we would realise that] this is the essence of *wilāyat*.

Her husband, Hāfīz Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib, was an officer in the Inland Waterway Department for quite some time, but he never brought a single *paisa* of bribery money into his house. Her food and drink – from the time she was born, up until today – has never been adulterated with even one iota of unlawful earning. We can truthfully say that this has been the lifestyle of Safīyyah Khātūn.

This fortunate woman became the wife of an officer who used to earn two hundred and twenty-five rupees per month as a salary. [He was considered to be a very highly paid person in those days.] This entire amount was meticulously spent every month. The result was that *zakāh* never became *fard* upon her. None but Safīyyah Khātūn could have achieved this.

Despite the intense love that she has for her father, her patience and fortitude is remarkable. The day her father passed away, everyone was occupied with the *jumu'ah salāh*, but she sat behind a curtain in the *seh darī*, next to her father's *janāzah* – fully occupied with the recitation of the Qur'ān. She sewed his *kafan* (shroud) with her own hands and no one even heard her lamenting or uttering a single word of grief.

She has three sons, (1) Hāfiz Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, who was born in Rajab 1295 A.H. (2) Hāfiz Muhammad Yūsuf Sāhib, who was born on the 28th of Muḥarram 1300 A.H., and (3) Muhammad Zakarīyyā who was born in Rabī' al-Awwal 1304 A.H. Her eldest son, Hāfiz Muhammad Is-hāq Marhūm – who was most beloved to Hadrat – passed away on Friday the 4th of Rabī' ath-Thānī 1309 A.H. She also had a daughter, who was born after Hāfiz Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib, by the name of Humaydah. Humaydah passed away when she was three years old. After Hāfiz Muhammad Yūsuf she had another boy by the name of Muhammad Yūnus. He passed away when he was five years old. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Al-hamdu lillāh, Hadrat's three grandsons are reminders of their grandfather and the light of their mother's eyes. Especially Hāfiz Muhammad Ya'qūb Sāhib. The lofty qualities of devotion, sincerity, servitude, submission, kindness, steadfastness, understanding, insight, upholding of ranks, self-control, and the ability to subdue his anger, have all reached an exceptional level in him. May Allāh ﷻ bless them with long lives and increase them in all the lofty qualities on account of which their names have been included in *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*.

Hadrat's son, Mahmūd Aḥmad Marhūm, left behind a son by the name of Sa'īd Aḥmad. He was born on the 26th of Rabī' al-Awwal 1310 A.H. He was one month and twenty days old when his father passed away. Hadrat Imām Rabbānī was particularly attached to him. He was a reminder of his father, and a gift from Allāh ﷻ in exchange for the 23-year-old son whom he had lost. Sa'īd Aḥmad lost his mother on the 15th of Rabī' al-Awwal 1312 A.H. He was not yet two years old when this tragedy occurred. May Allāh ﷻ bless him with a long life. He is presently sixteen years old and is studying Arabic in Deoband.

Hakīm Sāhib had a daughter by the name of Kulthūm. She was

born in Jumādā al-Ūlā 1303 A.H. and was only one year old when her mother passed away. On the 28th of Rajab 1318 A.H. – at the age of fifteen – Kulthūm got married to her cousin, Hāfiz Muḥammad Ya'qūb. A daughter by the name of Ruqayyah was born to them, but shortly thereafter, on the 21st of Dhū al-Qa'dah 1321 A.H., [Kulthūm] passed away. May Allāh ﷻ grant [Ruqayyah] a long life and bless her with the treasures of this world and the Hereafter.



I cannot count the number of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's spiritual children. More than three hundred '*ulamā*' studied Aḥadīth and other sciences under his tutelage. They have spread throughout the world. More than a hundred and fifty of them are still alive, and the majority of them are engrossed in teaching. They are all included amongst his righteous progeny.

As for those who derived spiritual benefit from Hadrat ... it is impossible to count their number. He has left behind more than thirty '*khulafā*' *sāhib-e-nisbat mashā'ikh-e-Tarīqah*, whose bestowal and blessings will continue for as long as Allāh ﷻ Wills. Hadrat's most senior '*khulafā*' are four in number. They are Hadrat Murshidunā Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib, Maulānā Mahmūd Ḥasan Sāhib, Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib and Maulānā Siddīq Aḥmad Sāhib. May Allāh ﷻ enable us to benefit from their long lives. Their academic and practical excellences, and their external and internal bestowal has spread throughout India and any person of insight will be able to perceive this.

Apart from the '*khulafā*', there are thousands upon thousands of associates who are included amongst Hadrat's righteous progeny. Thousands of these '*dhākirs shāghils*' (those engaged in Allāh's remembrance) are still continuing in their quest for Allāh ﷻ. As for those who are neglectful in this desirable (*mustaḥab*) practice ...

they have certainly also obtained the love for Allāh's Pleasure in their hearts.

Dislike for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and abhorrence of *bid'āt* – which are part and parcel of love for the Sunnah – is the salient feature of Hadrat's associates. This ought to be referred to as their intrinsic quality. Over and above this, these individuals generally possess the qualities of simplicity, informality, sincere interaction, mutual advising and counsel. This does not mean that misunderstanding does not exist amongst them. Misunderstanding existed amongst the senior personalities of the past as well. How, then, can we expect this particular group be devoid of it?

Not only amongst the juniors, but even amongst the seniors we encounter *ijtihādī* errors and differences of opinion. These cause disagreements, misunderstanding and tension, but – *al-hamdu lillāh* – this *ikhtilāf* (difference of opinion) does not reach the level of *khilāf* (dissension, conflict). No matter how antagonistic two brothers may become towards one another, they will join hands whenever they have to fight an outsider.

This is the fruit of the spirituality which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had blown into their hearts. The following saying applies to them:

تجري بهم مجرى الدم

"It flows like blood through them."

Whenever such differences are observed amongst the seniors, it is certainly the cause of progress in rank. Whenever [such] differences are observed amongst the juniors, one can only hope that, *inshā Allāh*, it will be removed in this world, if not in the Hereafter, when they will all hold on to one Shaykh and all their dissension will dissolve through the spirit of brotherhood which will overpower them. In emulation of the pious predecessors, even these qualities

can be included amongst Hadrat's *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt* (good qualities of enduring effect).

The tender plants of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's garden became so enamoured by the cool winds that, even after they have been orphaned, they have not become unmindful of the need for tutoring and education. They have understood that it is more beneficial to remain confined than to be free. It is more comforting to remain a slave than to be liberated. Therefore, the moment Hadrat Imām Rabbānī passed away and they received the reins of control, they expressed their desire to hand over the reins to his *khulafā'*. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, they expressed their servitude to whichever one of Hadrat's senior *khulafā'* they felt inclined to and attached themselves to whomever they had an affinity with.

When the one who has always tended to the growing trees and fragrant flowers is taken away from this world, and the gardener whose garden has reached the peak of its beauty becomes immersed in the Beauty of his Beloved, then this world of cause and effect needs another gardener to tend to the buds, flowers and unripe fruit. It is at such a time that the Affectionate Master distributes this responsibility amongst the worthy and capable children of the previous gardener. They are the ones who will protect the seeds which were planted by their father, and [they are the ones who will] guard the trees which were irrigated by him from the blowing winds and the plundering of highway robbers. Thus, when tender shoots claim that they are not in need of a gardener to tend to them, it is as though they are claiming that they have reached the level of perfection and that they have become fully established. This is known as *takabbur* (pride and haughtiness).

Al-hamdulillāh, due to Hadrat Imām Rabbānī's perfect *nisbat*, the majority of his associates were blessed with that same *nisbat*. They felt a growing need for a *murabbī* (a Shaykh) as they progressed. Everyone knows that there is no danger [in taking *bay'ah* to another

Shaykh] and that it is more comforting to be a *muqṭadī* (a follower) than to be a *muqṭadā* (leader).

The *murīds* of some *mashā'ikh* have, however, been deluded by Shayṭān. They tend to think: "The training and tutoring of our Shaykh was so perfect that, after his demise, there is no need to hold on to another Shaykh." Based upon such thoughts, they consider the renewal of *bay'ah* to be a disservice to their Shaykh, despite the fact that it had been the continuous practice of our past elders. All praise is due to Allāh! The fortunate group who remained bent on adhering to the Sunnah, understood this to be a Shayṭānic deception.

They did not desire any change in the continuous norm of Allāh ﷻ. In this world of cause and effect, they remained true servants of the Creator of causes. They understood that the Sahābah ؓ did not consider themselves to be absolved from pledging *bay'ah* at the hands of Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq ؓ after Rasūlullāh's ﷺ demise.

How can travellers like us then consider ourselves to be independent in this regard? We are but inexperienced children with no possessions of our own. Should we then consider it a small Favour of Allāh ﷻ when He Commanded the elder brothers to take care of their father's orphaned children? It would be far better for them to be in servitude to their elder brother and to consider him to have taken their father's place, than to roam around aimlessly – begging from people.

How fortunate are those children who, by virtue of their elder brothers, did not become scattered after the demise of the master of the house! How fortunate are those fathers whose adult sons willingly took the entire responsibility of seeing to the needs of their younger brothers and sisters upon their shoulders and embraced these immature, uneducated, and inexperienced children against their bosoms! It should not happen that they wander about

like vagabonds and that people start pointing fingers at them saying: "These are the children of such and such a king. They have lost everything and they are now extending their hands towards others."

The majority of Imām Rabbānī's associates were convinced of the importance of this desirable act. Although his *khulafā'* used to feel shy, hesitate and refrain from accepting *bay'ah* from anyone while Hadrat was alive, their attitudes changed completely when he passed away. They made an effort to gather their 'younger brothers' and place them under their wings. This was all by virtue of Hadrat's spirituality, the effect of his internal strength, and a continuous charity (*sadaqah jāriyah*) in his *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt* (righteous legacy). *Inshā Allāh*, it will remain for many years to come and will [continue to] serve as a means through which he obtains elevation in rank.

The joy that Hadrat Imām Rabbānī will experience due to the fact that they are following in this blessed *Silsilah* has been made obvious through true dreams and glad tidings. However, an obvious matter does not need any proof. There is no need for the excellences, which are clearly visible during a state of wakefulness, to be proven through dreams.

*Don't talk of the night
or nocturnal dreams ...
I am the slave of the day
and see clearly by the light of the mid-day sun.*



[During his lifetime], Imām Rabbānī had written books on contentious issues, [as well as books on] the rules and regulations of the Sharī'ah. These are included amongst his *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt*. These books have been printed and published and are available to the world. I feel that all his writings should be collated

and published as a single collection. *Inshā Allāh* – if Allāh ﷻ Wills – this will also be done. They are as follows:

1. *Tasfiyah al-Qulūb*: This is an Urdu translation of *Ḍiyā' al-Qulūb*, written by A'lā Hadrat Hājī Sāhib.
2. *Imdād as-Sulūk*: This is a translation of *Risālah Makkīyyah* on the subject of *taṣawwuf*. This work was written by Hadrat in his early days under the instruction of Hadrat Hāfiz Dāmin Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh*.
3. *Hidāyatush Shī'ah*: This is a reply to the objections made by the Shī'ī scholar, Hādī 'Alī Shī'ī Lucknowī.
4. *Zubdatul Manāsik*: This contains all the essential rules and regulations of *hajj*.
5. *Laṭā'if Rashīdiyyah*: It contains certain intricate points on specific Qur'ānic verses, as well as proof from the Aḥadīth for the prevailing *purdah* amongst the noble families of India.
6. *Fatāwā Milād wa 'Urs*: A collection of *fatāwā* on the subjects of *mīlād*, *'urs* and other related customs, together with testimonies from other senior *'ulamā'*.
7. *Risālah Tarāwīḥ*: Evidence in favour of twenty *rak'ats* of *tarāwīḥ* from the Aḥadīth.
8. *Qutūf Dāniyah*: Juristic proof for the reprehensibility of a second congregation in a residential Musjid.
9. *Jumu'ah fī al-Qurā*: A reply to the *fatwā* of the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth wherein they cite the permissibility of performing *jumu'ah* in a village.

10. *Radd at-Tughyān*: The Ahl-e-Hadīth claimed that the stops (*auqāf*) in the Qur'ān are *bid'ah*. This book is a refutation of their claim.

11. *Ihtiyāt az-Zuhr*: This book establishes that, where *jumu'ah* is valid, there is no need to perform *zuhr salāh* as a precaution.

12. *Hidāyatul Mu'tadī*: A reply to reading Sūrah al-Fātiḥah behind the imām.

13. *Sabīl ar-Rashād*: A refutation of not practicing on taqlid.

The book, *Barāhīn Qāṭi'ah*, was written under Hadrat's instruction. He then proofread it from beginning to end and wrote the preface to it. Thus, we can also include it amongst Hadrat's writings. This book is a reply to *Anwār Sāfi'ah*. It is a unique book on the subject of refutation of *bid'āt* and the establishment of the Sunnah. We can safely say that it is a manifestation of Hadrat's *nisbat* and his academic and practical excellences. The forceful and awe-inspiring tone which was adopted in this book – out of love for the Sunnah – cannot be found in any of his other writings.



The *wasīyyat* (bequest) which Hadrat Imām Rabbānī had written several years prior to his demise is also included amongst his *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt*. He wrote it and filed it away so that it could be read after his demise and practised upon. The entire *wasīyyat* has been printed in *Wasl al-Habīb*. His *wasīyyat* relates to the total obedience to *Dīn* and is addressed to all his associates. It reads as follows:

Wasīyyat of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī rahimahullāh.

“All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ. Salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This is a

general *wasīyyat*. It may be read by all, [and] it may be read to all, and everyone should practise upon it.

I strongly emphasize upon my children, my wife and my friends to live in accordance with the Sharī'ah, considering the Sunnah to be very essential. The slightest non-adherence to the Sharī'ah should be regarded a bitter enemy.

It is extremely detrimental to follow worldly customs by considering them to be trivial.

To attach importance to the enjoyment of food and clothing would cause much damage to one's *Dīn* and worldly affairs. You must be particular about abstaining from this.

To do something beyond one's capability would eventually lead to one's humiliation. A person will have to bear its humiliation in his *Dīn* and worldly affairs.

Being temperamental and ill-mannered would seriously cause Allāh's Displeasure. Such a person is despised in this world and has to suffer much humiliation in the Hereafter. It is essential to be lenient and compassionate towards everyone.

The smallest evil act is evil. Even if obedience and good deeds are few, they are great companions.

Formalities at weddings and funerals are not devoid of *bid'āt*. Do not trivialize such formalities. [They are serious offences.]

To do something beyond one's capability, to do something against the Sharī'ah, or to commit a *bid'at* merely because you fear the criticism and disparaging remarks of people and family is certainly not a mark of intelligence. It has evil consequences, both in *Dīn* and one's worldly affairs.

The Sharī'ah has issued severe warnings against the evils of *isrāf* (extravagance and wastage). The Qur'ān refers to it as Shayṭān's brother.

When I pass away, you may send reward to me (*isāl-e-thawāb*) according to your ability. Don't ever do more than what you are capable of. You should not resort to any formality which is against the Sharī'ah. Ensure that whatever you do is in accordance with the Sunnah.

Live with mutual affection towards one another.

I do not owe anyone even a single *paisa* (cent), so don't worry about this in the least..."



Imām Rabbānī's writings on issues concerning the Sharī'ah and Tarīqah are included amongst his *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt*. These have been written [in the form of letters] to various people and have been spread throughout the world. Although they have been addressed to specific people, their application is general because they contain the following: (1) The removal of doubts and misgivings, (2) establishment of the truth, (3) guidance on the path of *sulūk*, and (4) encouragement and support in acts of obedience. Based upon this, they will also be a *sadaqah jāriyah* (continuous charity) in Hadrat's favour.

The *fatāwā* which had been issued by Hadrat regarding matters related to the Sharī'ah have been printed by Maulwī 'Alī Nazār Sāhib of Murādābād. I have also been trying to obtain this treasure. Hopefully, I will be successful in this regard. However, there are about a hundred and fifty hand-written letters which Hadrat had written on the subject of *tarīqah*. These have been published under

the title, *Makātīb Rashīdiyyah*. This hundred-page ocean is available to the public. If Allāh ﷻ accepts this biography, it will also be included amongst Hadrat's *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt*.

When a person has love for the *Ahlullāh*, he is actually accumulating a treasure for himself in the Hereafter. Thus, if anyone did not [have the opportunity to] develop an affinity and bond with Hadrat Imām Rabbānī during his lifetime, then such a person's good fortune is obvious if he should develop an affinity with Hadrat upon reading this biography. Even though it has developed later, he has certainly earned something. This book will serve as a source of *īsāl-e-thawāb* for Hadrat because it has become the cause of this worthless servant's [‘Āshiq Ilāhī] rectification and acquisition of reward.

Whatever this worthless servant possesses is a gift from the court of the unlettered one ﷻ. In reality, the publication of this biography was made possible through Hadrat's spiritual influence after his demise – and certainly not because of my capability. Thus, I have no right whatsoever to have feel any pride over this contribution. I feel that, while he was alive, he had attracted the creation towards himself through his character. Now that he has departed, the method of guiding the creation has changed. [They are now being guided and steered through this biography which is a testimony of his character.] Since an affinity for Hadrat would compel one to submit to the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the means which leads to the obedience of the Sharī'ah and servitude to Allāh ﷻ – which will [inevitably] develop in Hadrat's associates – will [also] be included amongst his *al-bāqiyāt as-sālihāt*.



AUTHOR'S NOTE

My respected *Dīnī* brothers, elders and friends! I am now taking leave of you. The work which Allāh ﷻ wanted to take from this worthless servant has now come to an end. Hadrat bid farewell on the 8th of Jumādā ath-Thānīyah 1323 A.H. His blessed body was laid to rest beneath the earth and his soul returned to the heavens. His sweet biography has ended today – the 30th of Dhū al-Hijjah 1326 A.H.

The subject matter which was on my mind has been put onto paper and conveyed to your hearts through your eyes. Every beginning has an end, and every subject has a predicate [the assertion upon which an argument is based]. There was a day when we said *Bismillāh...* to this biography. Today is the day that we have to write the conclusion. This is how the world operates. Sometimes we have the joy of birth and sometimes the grief of death. Sometimes we express the joy of someone's arrival, but at other times we have to cry over his departure. As a poet says:

*Even if a person lives until the Resurrection,
[at some point] he will still have to die.*

But there is a death like ours ... we die without taking anything with us. Then there is a demise like that of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī ... he has taken everything with him, but he has also left behind such good deeds that it will be written in his Book of Deeds as actions which he had personally performed, even though he did not perform these actions himself. This is the Bounty of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows on whomever He Wills.

Remember ... our abode is the grave, and our true life is the life of the Hereafter. Wake up! Get up and open your eyes. As long as you are alive you will have every type of desire and longing. What will you take [with you] if you remain negligent? Do as much as you

can, for you will eventually have to rest in your grave. Whatever you have to earn, do it by holding on to the example of Imām Rabbānī. After all, you will have to die and you will then be resurrected and presented in the Court of Allāh ﷻ.

Since the demise of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī, I have been holding on to Murshidunā Maulānā al-Hāfiz al-Hāj al-Maulwī Khalīl Ahmād Sāhib. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, this means has been sufficient to quench my thirst. I am not saying that you should become like me, but on the basis of the Hadīth which states “*Dīn* is advice,” I certainly advise you to attach yourself to this *Silsilah*. Take *bay'ah* to whomever you wish of Imām Rabbānī's *khulafā'*, for this entire orchard is filled with light. May Allāh ﷻ enable this sun of guidance to remain glowing for many years to come. Listen ... death is with every person. There is a famous saying: “*Lost time can never be retrieved*”. Do not allow yourself to regret lost opportunities.

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفْوضُ أُمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

“You shall soon recall what I am telling you.

I surrender my affairs to Allāh.

Surely, Allāh is Watchful over His bondsmen.”

(Sūrah al-Mu'min, 40: 44)

May Allāh ﷻ inspire me, you and everyone else to follow the Sunnah, and may He include us amongst His beloved servants.

آمين يا رب العالمين والسلام مع الإكرام



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

من لم يشكر الناس لم يشكر الله

"The one who does not show gratitude to people, cannot show gratitude to Allāh."

My heart desires to express gratitude to my spiritual guide and mentor, Hadrat Maulānā al-Hāj al-Hāfiz al-Maulwī Khalīl Ahmad Sāhib Ambhetwī, through whose special kindness and affection, a worthless person like me has been able to render the service of compiling this biography. Hadrat was the first to impress upon me that I should write it. Thereafter, other elders also encouraged me in this regard. How can I find the words to thank him sufficiently? Hadrat had shown affection to me even while Imām Rabbānī was alive and I am reduced to tears whenever I think about it. Hadrat took me under his wing even before I could be orphaned. Then, as time passed by, he continued directing his attention towards me.

What can I say about what I was and what I have become? I am certainly worthless and deficient, but – *al-hamdu lillāh* – I am hopeful of many bounties. Hadrat has not merely showered one favour upon me for which I should be grateful. On the contrary, every part of my body is steeped in his favours. Every vein and tissue in my body enjoys the kindness of this affectionate master. And what can I say now that I am externally aligned to him as well [since he asked me to write this biography]?

*I have hope [of salvation and reward]
due to the dust beneath his steps,
and I keep on building my hopes
on the blessedness of this dust.*

It was due to Hadrat's affection that he perused through almost every page of this book before it could be published, and that he

shouldered this responsibility despite his many duties. I cannot remember him ever refusing any of my requests. *Al-hamdu lillāh*, I received whatever I asked for and every request I forwarded was fulfilled. Thus, although I am happy about the appreciation of such an affectionate master, I am even happier about his favours upon me. My gratitude entails asking him for more favours, and for the bounty which I am most in need of. [I request] that he should continue keeping me under his wing, and that his affection towards me should continue forever. I have no other wish. All my *Dīnī* and worldly affairs are included in this.

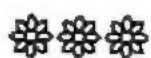
May Allāh ﷻ give this captain a long life to steer his ship in the tumultuous waters of this fleeting ocean. May He bestow him with [the honour of] unlimited progress in ranks of proximity [to Him].
Āmīn.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank my sincere friends from amongst my brothers in *ṭarīqah* for responding spontaneously to my appeal for help in compiling this biography. They considered it a source of reward to be included amongst those who assisted and supported the compilation of their Shaykh's biography. Thus, they did as much as they could in this regard and forwarded whatever information they had. I ask them to pardon me for selecting certain aspects from their writings while omitting others. Changes and alterations were only made when I was compelled to do so. Since a person is excused when he is under compulsion, I have hope that I will not be taken to task for this.

This biography is a book of history and will be read by all and sundry. Therefore I [was forced to] remove any strong emotions which their writings contained due to their love for *Hadrat*. Passionate love has to remain in the heart and therefore it has not been put onto paper. It must be kept subdued in the heart and, *inshā Allāh*, there is hope of seeing its fruits on the Day of Resurrection.

With this I take leave of you.

Was salām ni'mal khitām,
Muhammad 'Āshiq Ilāhī, *may Allāh pardon him.*
Ex-principal: Khayr al-Matābi', Meerut.



TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Al-hamdu lillāh, thumma al-hamdu lillāh – all thanks is due solely to Allāh ﷻ for having enabled us to complete the English translation of this blessed and inspiring book. We make an earnest *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to accept this translation, to make it a means through which we may attain salvation in this world and the Hereafter, and to include us in the *silsilah* of Hadrat Imām Rabbānī *quddisa sirruhu* by virtue of this humble contribution.

أَجِبُ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ – لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُنِي صَالِحًا

*"I love the righteous although I am not [one] of them.
Perhaps Allāh will endow me with righteousness
[by virtue of my love for them]."*

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors and blunders in this translation. We humbly request the reader to inform us of these so that they may be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions would be highly appreciated.

Was salām

Mahomed Mahomedy [Translator]

19 Dhū al-Qa'dah 1431 A.H. (27 October 2010)

Durban, South Africa.

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تذكرة الرشيد

TADHKIRATUR RASHID

Biography of
Hadrat Maulānā Rashid Ahmad Sahib
Muhaddith Gangohi
Quddisa sirruhu al-'aziz

Hadrat Maulana 'Ashiq Ilahi Meeruti Rahimahullah